# A History of the Lutheran Church in Guyana

# A HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA

Paul B. Beatty, Jr

# NOTE TO THE READER

As you read this writing of the history of the Lutheran Church in Guyana, you are invited to look with a critical eye. If you report errors, misinterpretations, omissions, or additional sources, if you cite deficiencies in balance or perspective, you will assist in making possible an improved recording of the history.

Do you desire a brief survey of this history? Each chapter is introduced by a poem and a synopsis. The poems, all by contemporary Guyanese authors, seem to fit the need of each period of the history. By reading all the poems and synopses in sequence, you would have glimpses of the mood and content of the full history.

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# PREFACE

The 225-year-old Lutheran Church in Guyana is one of the oldest Protestant churches in South America and the oldest church of the Christian faith in Guyana.

The record here presented is intended to show how the life and development of the church has been influenced by overseas Lutheran connections, internal church policy, and other factors. Problems and successes from the past are highlighted with a view of pointing the way to a better future.

The history of the Lutheran Church in Guyana is presented against a background of parallel developments in current events and in the life of other Christian churches. No attempt is made to chart the history of the country or the history of the other Christian churches in anything more than illustrative sketches. However, the history of the country and the history of other churches overshadow the history of the Lutheran church at certain points in the narrative. This is because it seems that in certain periods attenuated activity or paucity of information concerning the Lutheran church necessitates fuller development of what was going on outside the Lutheran church in order to better understand what happened in it before and after.

No attempt is made to present the histories of individual congregations, parishes, or pastors and other leaders of the Lutheran Church in Guyana except in the context of an attempt to understand the picture of the church as a whole.

Large collections of primary source materials were found which were apparently unavailable to all who have attempted to record the history of the church up to this time. (Explanations are given in Appendix I and in the note and the annotations of the Bibliography.) Considerable time was spent during the early part of 1967 in the archives of the Lutheran Church in Guyana. Most of the materials there were in complete disorder, having never been arranged or filed in any way. They were thoroughly mixed by subject matter, historical period, and every other conceivable category. The entire body of documents in the archives was perused and all that seemed to be of special significance read, with the exception of some in Dutch and some in a deteriorated condition.

A similar set of disorganized papers and documents was found at the library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, early in 1968, and handled in much the same way. However, the work with this set of materials was less thorough because: 1) only

about eighteen hours was spent with them 2) a high percentage of the materials was made up of papers of doubtful value 3) of those items deemed valuable, a much higher proportion, a preponderance, are in the Dutch language.

Extensive use of certain sources, such as Kunkle's manuscript, will be partially explained by the annotations in the Bibliography.

Where there is a variation in the spelling of proper names between the text and the quotations of the paper, the spellings of the text conform with the extant signatures of the persons involved, such as Abbensetts, Johan Henrik Faerkenius, and Mittelholzer.

The poetry which is used to assist the reader in becoming involved in the mood of each chapter has all been written by Guyanese authors.

Among those who have aided in the work of preparing this paper, special recognition is due: to the officers of the Lutheran Church in Guyana for access to the archives and other assistance; to Dr. Henry H. Scherer, Librarian of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for his co-operation and for access to the seminary's archives; to Mr. N. E. Cameron, M.A., President of the Royal Agricultural And Commercial Society of Georgetown for approval to quote from **Timehri** the poems introducing chapters I, II, III, IV, and VII; to Mr. David De Caires, editor, for approval to quote from **New World** the poems introducing chapters V and VI; to the Board of World Missions of the Lutheran Church in America for a variety of means of assistance; to Pastor Winston Bone and Louis Bone for helpful critical comments; to Pastor Aubrey Bowen for providing much helpful information and criticism; and to the faculty of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, especially Professors James Scherer and Robert Fischer for an abundance of helpful criticism in the preparation of the thesis which was revised for this publication.

# CHAPTER I

# DUTCH BEGINNINGS
# 1743 — 1781

## THE SONG OF GUYANA'S CHILDREN

W. Hawley Bryant

Born in the land of the Mighty Roraima
Land of great rivers and far stretching sea,
So like the mountain, the sea and the river
Great wide and deep in our lives would we be.

**Chorus :**

Onward, upward, may we ever go,
Day by day in strength and beauty grow,
Till at length we each of us may show
What Guiana's sons and daughters can be.

Born in the land of Kaieteur's shining splendour,
Land of the palm tree, the croten and fern,
We would possess all the virtues and graces,
We all the glory of goodness would learn.

Born in the land where men sought El Dorado,
Land of the Diamond and bright shining gold,
We would build up our faith, love and labour,
God's Golden city which never grows old.

In the year 1743 Lutherans in the Dutch colony of Berbice on the Northeastern coastal area of South America took steps to plant their church. There were problems with the colonial authorities, problems in financing the endeavor, problems in securing pastoral services. But the church was planted in a land of great rivers and far stretching sea by men of hope and vision.

This was a noble venture, but it had serious limitations. The church founded was of the colonists, by the colonists, and for the colonists. Zeal to share the faith in wider relationships was missing. There was no concern for evangelizing or educating the slaves, whom the colonists exploited.

The church and the colony were nearly wiped out in a slave revolt. The only lesson which seems to have been learned by the colonists is that slaves can be dangerous.

## A — Lutherans Organize in Berbice

On October 15, 1743, a meeting was convened about eighty-five miles up the Berbice River at the home of Mr. Lodewyk Abbensetts. A number of individuals professing the unaltered Augsburg Confession of faith gathered to consider steps to be taken in forming a Lutheran congregation. At this meeting of Dutch Lutheran colonists it was resolved

> . . . that petitions should be forwarded to the Honourable Court of Policy (the colonial legislature), and to the Most Honourable Directors of the Colony, and their High Mightinesses the States General of the Netherlands, praying for the privilege of the free exercise of their religion, and that at the same time applications should be made by letter to the Reverend Consistory, of Amsterdam, soliciting their aid and co-operation in this urgent matter, and also their good services in procuring a clergyman for the community.[1]

Perhaps a brief survey of early Dutch Lutheranism will assist in understanding the significance of this church planting.

## B — Early Dutch Lutheran Martyrs

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg. This is remembered by many as the beginning of the Reformation. Persistence in open criticism of the Roman Catholic Church led to Luther's excommunication in 1521. Large segments of the Roman Church left and followed Luther.

Luther's teachings came very early into the Netherlands, or the "low country." In Antwerp Luther's teachings were actively disseminated not only by his brothers in the Augustinian order but also by German businessmen and by persons of Jewish heritage from Spain and Portugal.

July 1, 1523, two Augustinian monks were burned to death in Brussels as followers of Luther: Hendrik Vos and Jan vanden Esschen. In August of 1523 Luther wrote an open letter "To the Christians in Holland, Brabent, and Flanders," quoting such passages of Scripture as Romans 12:22 urging joy in the midst of tribulation. Luther said:

> . . . it has been your privilege before all others in the world not only to hear the gospel and know Christ but also to be the first to suffer . . . death, for Christ's sake . . . O how contemptuously were these two souls condemned, but how gloriously and with what eternal joy will they return with Christ to judge justly those by

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[1]Rev. J. R. Mittelholzer, "Ebenezer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Berbice, British Guiana, S.A.," **History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, 1842-1892** (Philadelphia), p. 313.

whom they were here unjustly condemned. . . . Let us renew our hearts and be of good courage and joyfully allow the Lord to slay us.

Luther also memorialized the men in a lengthy hymn: "A New Song of the Two Christian Martyrs . . ." Popular interest was high. English and Dutch translations of the Scriptures began appearing.

Luther in his struggle with Roman Catholics thought it safest to put the church under the patronage of the state, with dissenters free to emigrate. Some thought that to remain in the Netherlands they must remain in the Roman Catholic Church. Others were too Dutch to emigrate and too Lutheran to be Roman Catholics.[2]

### C — The Augsburg Confession and Dutch Independence

In 1530 Charles V called a Diet of German princes in an effort to find a basis for unity against the Turks between those who gave loyalty to the Pope and those who professed the teachings of Luther. Philip Melanchthon, in co-operation with others, prepared twenty-eight articles to be presented at this diet at Augsburg, giving the theological consensus of those who followed Luther.

The political purposes of the assembly failed. However, the Lutheran princes found new unity in the Augsburg Confession, which through the years has continued to be the chief written symbol distinctive of the Lutheran Church. Princes who adhered to the Confession, in alliance, guaranteed the free exercise of this religion in their provinces.

Soon after the gathering at Augsburg, attempts were made to rework the Augsburg Confession in order to achieve a confession acceptable to a wider audience. Many Lutherans throughout the years resisted all such changes and expressed their adherence to the "unaltered" Augsburg Confession.

Meanwhile in the Netherlands, persecution of Protestants continued. While Lutherans there were seeking accommodation or striving to bear up under the persecution, Anabaptists and Calvinists were spreading revolutionary fervour. In 1565 Calvinist leaders of a Dutch revolt against Spain sought a political alliance with the German princes who adhered to the Augsburg Confession. However, Lutheran princes were not open to political alliance except with those who would accept the Augsburg Confession. So Calvinists compromised with Spain at that time, but then declared independence successfully in 1581, and The Netherlands joined the nations of the world.

### D — Lutheran Congregations in the Netherlands

Luther's great popularity in the Netherlands in the first years of the Reformation did not last. In addition to the unlutheran revolutionary spirit which was stirring among the people, a Dutch Lutheran

[2]Prof. Dr. J. W. Pont, "The Lutheran Church in Holland," **The Constructive Quarterly** (September, 1916), p. 552.

authority mentions three other reasons why Luther's popularity diminished: 1) Luther's antagonism to the Anabaptists, who were admired in Dutch areas, and his call for repression of the peasants' revolt 2) monasteries had been one of the main abodes of Luther's Dutch followers 3) Dutch people did not understand Luther's conception of the Eucharistic presence of Christ, which was understood and appreciated by German residents among them.[3]

With the government first allied to the Roman Catholics, then to the Calvinists, Dutch Lutheran congregations, when formed, were devoid of the patronage of the government. Neither did they form any synod or national church organization. However, the congregation at Amsterdam came to assume a highly influential role among the Dutch Lutheran congregations. Outside the Netherlands its polity became a pattern for Lutherans in London, in Dutch colonies, and later in the United States, especially the General Synod.

Dutch Lutheran polity was a considerable adjustment from the pattern of German Lutheran polity. Elders elected by the congregations were considered provisional substitutes for princes and magistrates since the state was not Lutheran. As substitute princes the elders were to be rich and influential members of the public community. Elders were elected twice per year, but the same persons were almost always re-elected. The elders were the principals in church government, with power to call and depose pastors. The pastor of a congregation had little voice in material questions. However, pastors and theologians were considered the authorities in matters of doctrine.

In matters such as church architecture and worship relatively conservative alterations were made in the Lutheran Church in other European lands. The old Roman Catholic church buildings and congregations there formed the basis for the Lutheran Church. Luther felt it best not to disturb the people unduly, so changes were largely limited to those necessitated by the rediscovery of the Gospel. However, as all the Dutch Lutheran congregations were new ones, they tended to be less formally structured in liturgy and in architecture, while holding strictly to the unaltered Augsburg Confession.

Supplementary confessions were constructed and adopted by individual Dutch congregations from time to time. After a confession on the omnipresence of Christ was adopted by the congregation at Amsterdam, in 1603 a Reformed pastor preached a popular sermon ridiculing the Lutheran doctrine. Emotions rose to such an extent that the government halted Lutheran services in the city. Elders and ministers of the Lutheran congregation wrote a confession and submitted it to the city authorities. It was accepted, but the ban was not lifted. Services continued quietly, however, and in a year or so the congregation had recovered its former position.

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[3]Ibid., p. 549.

We note that early Dutch Lutheranism, strongly confessional in doctrine, experimental in cultus, was in a precarious minority position in its institutional life.

## E — Dutch in Guyana

"Guiana" is a geographical term delineating an area in Northeastern South America which today includes the nation, Guyana. Guiana is bordered by the Orinoco River, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Amazon River with some of its tributaries. "Guiana" is currently considered to be from an Amerindian word meaning "land of waters."

Beginning in the early part of the sixteenth century Guiana was visited by Europeans, especially the Spanish. Guiana became a land of great excitement to Europeans through a story told by the dying Juan Martinez. He was rescued from perishing in the Orinoco River by Guianians. When he left the company of the Amerindians, he told of being taken to a city

> . . . the houses of which were covered with shining gold, stretching as far as his eyes could reach. The place was situated on a great lake or inland sea . . . the sands of which were golden; from which circumstances, together with the abundance of precious metal he saw in and on the dwellings of the people, he named it 'El Dorado.'[4]

Whether this vision was hallucination, invention, or legend presented as fact we do not know; but among those captivated by it was Sir Walter Raleigh. Just enough gold is being mined in Guiana currently to prevent saying that the vision was without any foundation.

Though the Dutch nation was not established until almost the end of the sixteenth century, it became a great world power almost immediately. In 1601 the Dutch East India Company was chartered by the States General of the Netherlands to compete with the English East India Company which had been formed the year before. In 1602 the States General granted freedom of convoy to a group of Dutch merchants who were trading in Guiana and in the West Indies. The first settlement made by the Dutch in the land that is now Guyana was on the Essequibo River at the confluence of the Essequibo, Cuyuni and Mazaruni rivers about 1616. The second was on the Berbice River, under Abraham Van Peere in 1627.[5] This settlement, about eighty miles up the river, was guarded by Fort Nassau.

## F — A Lutheran Congregation Is Planted

In 1743 when the Lutherans of Berbice met to organize, it was not certain that they would be able to do so. However, they felt that

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[4]Mittelholzer, p. 311. (Quoting Rodway and Watt, **Annals of Guiana** [Georgetown, 1888]).

[5]Ibid, p. 312.

the time was right. Lutherans had been in Berbice for a number of years, and their number had grown large enough to be considered sufficient for a congregation.

The general state of the Colony of Berbice in 1743 is described like this:

> In addition to Fort Nassau, Fort St. Andries had just been established near the coast at the junction of the Berbice and Canje Rivers, practically where the present town of New Amsterdam is situated. On the upper river there was a settlement at Wieronie and another called the "Accaway," posts intended for trade with the Indians. The Indians were not allowed to be enslaved nor removed from the colony, and as yet the number of Negro slaves was small.
>
> On paper there were 113 private estates, but few of them were of any importance. Most of them were new and still in the stage of fond dreams on the part of their owners. These owners were of a variety of European nationalities. Most were Dutch, quite a few were French, some were German. All have left their traces in family names still current among the coloured people of the river and coastlands. It is estimated that the then white population of Berbice was less than 200.
>
> Fort Nassau, the "capital," was built of wood. Behind its palisades were a few small cannons. There were barracks for sixty soldiers, the governor's residence, and likely some sort of governmental building. Beyond the walls of the fort, like a suburb, was a village called New Amsterdam. When the early records speak of New Amsterdam it is this which is meant—not the town near the mouth of the river that now bears that name. In this "suburban" village, shops and houses of some mechanics and white servants were erected, and an inn was here. This was the location of the first Lutheran Church building . . .
>
> The Dutch indeed made bricks and even imported them, and later seemed to have had very comfortable homes. But in these early days we should not glamorize their homes too much. One writer has described them as "wooden castles covered with leaves." Thatch was the roofing used. It was cool, fairly serviceable, and very cheap. It also harbored innumerable insects. [6]

Now let us note the general religious situation which these Lutheran colonists faced in 1743.

> About twenty years before this a Dutch Reformed Church had been built at the mouth of the Weironie River. There had

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[6]Howard R. Kunkle, "Under the White Swan" (Unpublished history of the Lutheran Church in British Guiana, written about 1943, slightly revised in 1959, under the auspices of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America), p. 12f.

been great irregularity in the services on account of the difficulty in getting "Predicants" at the small salary offered. So on the 21st of February, 1735, the Dutch Reformed had been constituted the State Church by an act of the Berbice Association which imposed a tax to provide a Church Fund.

On the 7th of January, 1736, Johannes Fronderdorff was appointed Predicant of Berbice. His salary was nine hundred guilders per annum, one-half cast of wine, one anchor of brandy, and free boarding for himself, wife, daughter, and maid-servant . . .

It was said of this first Reformed preacher, that he was so intolerant, greedy, and quarrelsome, that the Governor was unwilling to permit him to continue at his table, so a house was built for him near the church and eight hundred guilders were allowed to him in lieu of rations.

At this time, it was said that both religion and morals were at a very low standard, but the church was well attended, and the contributions came in without much difficulty.[7]

The tax assessment for the Reformed Church fund was twenty-five guilders per planter. This establishment of religion came very quickly after political organisation in Berbice. The Colony of Berbice was granted a constitution by the States General in 1732.[8]

Lutherans in Berbice were surely encouraged by the fact that the first Lutheran pastor, the Reverend Johann Pfaff had come to neighboring Surinam in 1742. Paramaribo in Surinam had been established as a Dutch trading post in 1613, and the Dutch Reformed Church was established there in 1668. Lutherans were there from the early years, but did not organize a congregation until November 15, 1741.[9]

Lutherans had also established a congregation in the New Amsterdam that was to become New York. When the regulations for that North American colony were formulated by the West India Company in 1624, it was stated that colonists "shall hold no other services than those of the true Reformed Religion."[10] Other worship was permitted only in private homes. In 1649 Lutherans petitioned for permission to call a pastor and hold public worship. After negotiating with the congregation at Amsterdam and with Dutch official sources at great length, they were finally successful in getting their first pastor, Johannes Gutwasser, in 1657. Upon arrival he was for-

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7Rev. Ralph J. White, **Six Years in Hammock Land** (Philadelphia, 1922), p. 28.

8The Rev. L. Crookall, **British Guiana, or Work and Wanderings Among the Creoles and Coolies, the Africans and Indians of the Wild Country** (London, 1898), p. 29.

9Kunkle, p. 37.

10Harry J. Kreider, Ph. D., **The Beginnings of Lutheranism in New York** (New York, 1949), p. 4.

bidden from taking up any pastoral responsibilities or presenting his credentials to his congregation. His deportment was ordered. He was spirited away and conducted secretive services for about a year until he became ill. Upon arrival in Manhattan for treatment he was arrested, and upon recovery, deported. In 1664 Governor Peter Stuyvesant surrendered the colony to the British. Religious toleration began. Lutheran petitioners again requested Amsterdam to send a pastor. In 1668 Pastor Jacob Fabritius accepted the call. The congregation at Amsterdam was continually related to this work for more than a hundred years.[11]

In the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although Lutheran congregations were tolerated in the cities and towns, they were generally forbidden in rural areas. A seventeenth century exception was Bodegraven, which belonged to a Lutheran prince. An eighteenth century exception was Groede, which served as an asylum for Lutherans driven out of Saltzburg by the Roman Catholics.[12]

Therefore, when Lutherans in Berbice took steps to organize, there may have been some doubt concerning whether they would obtain the free exercise of their religion. But there was no doubt where they would turn for assistance. The congregation at Amsterdam was pre-eminent among the Lutheran congregations of the Netherlands and also was actively related to Lutheran communities in other distant lands.

In addition to the historic meeting on October 15, 1743, which is considered to be the date of the organization of the Lutheran congregation in Berbice, Lutherans met :

**Saturday, June 1, 1743.** The first gathering of the fellow believers of the evangelical unaltered Augsburg Confession. Six directors nominated : Philip Marius, Osterlings, Joseph Dietswold, Christian Frederick Gotske, Jan Spielman, and Henniorks (the last name not clear).

**Monday and Tuesday, October 28, 29, 1743.** (record blurred, but there is reference to Abbenzetts writing a letter to the Consistorium at Amsterdam about a bequest.) The names of Clary N. Aldenhaden and Benjamin Pfaff are mentioned.

**July 6, 1744.** Two letters received from the Consistorium. (Something is mentioned about certain papers not being in order. The directors called for a general meeting of the fellow believers.)

**Sunday, July 23, 1764.** At Plantation La Solitude. (Evidently Abbenzetts was living here by now, if he had not already been doing so in 1743.) Letters received from Amsterdam dated February 9th, 1745.

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[11] "The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649-1772", Arnold J. H. van Laer (tr.), forward by Harry J. Kreider (ed.?) (bulletin of The New York Public Library, 1943-1944, bound excerpts), passim. (For further description of the source, see Appendix I.)

[12] Pont, p. 559.

**Tuesday, May 26, 1747.** Decided to ask Dominie Klipperbein of Amsterdam to send a preacher.

**March 7, 1748.** Received and read letters from Consistorium at Amsterdam and Klipperbein. The following directors were named: Casel Wantrel, Kridlowsky, Abbenzetts, and Schirmeister.

**August 25, 1752.** Joseph Dietzwold elected Director and Jan Christining. Mention is made also of Marius, Schirmeister, Dietsworld, Spielman, Abbenzetts, and Piatorius.

**Sunday, October 15, 1752.** Preacher Johan Kendrick arrived. First preaching service to be held in Fort Nassau on Sunday, October 22. Congregation to elect four elders and two deacons.

**Sunday, October 22, 1752.** Elected as Elders: Spielman, Abbenzetts, Schirmeister, George. As Deacons: Wantrel and Kridlowsky.[13]

Also an old inventory lists the following:

> Excerpt from the Resolutions of the Administrators of this Colony dated 11th of May, 1744, containing consent for Free Public Religious Services. Request by the Trustees to the Inspector of Police, with the affiction, containing consent for free gatherings of fellow believers, dated the 12th of October, 1744 . . . Calling of Pastor Faerkenius (also called Kendrick . . . ) the 23rd of May, 1752.[14]

Faerkenius, the first Lutheran Pastor to come to Berbice was ordained in Amsterdam May 17, 1752.[15] October 22, 1752, in Berbice he signed acceptance of the constitution provided by Amsterdam: "Johan Henrik Faerkenius, Primus verbi divini minister evangel: Lutheranae ecclesiae Berbicensis," with signatures following of "L. Abbensetts" and others.[16]

The financial arrangements under which these Lutherans planted their congregation were quite stringent. The Directors of the Colony were pleased to grant the application for the free exercise of the Lutheran faith with the proviso:

> . . . that the clergyman to be chosen and engaged by them should, previous to his departure to the Colony, be presented to them (the Directors) for their approbation and confirmation; that the expenses of the salary of said minister, and also of the church

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13Kunkle, p. 15f. (Here Kunkle is recording information from "early records" which should be in the archives of the Lutheran Church in Guyana currently, but are not.)

14Ibid., p. 17. (The items listed on the "old inventory" were not available to Kunkle. Now the "old inventory" quoted is no longer available).

15Extract in Dutch, dated 22 October 1752, from Amsterdam records of ordination. Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana.

16Document including signatures of acceptance of rules of operation for congregations of the Augsburg Confession in the Netherlands, 1686 edition. Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana.

or building to be erected or used for the purpose of divine worship, should be defrayed by the members of the congregation themselves, and not at the charge of the Directors; that they should moreover, contribute to the ordinary church (the Dutch-Reformed) fund equally and in the same proportion as all other inhabitants. [17]

Although the congregation at Amsterdam was quite willing to assist in the founding of a Lutheran congregation in Berbice, it may be assumed that they gave extremely little, if any, financial help. It seems that they first secured what they considered to be solid guarantees concerning the terms, especially the financial terms, of a call; then found a candidate, preferably young, healthy, and single who adhered to the unaltered Augsburg Confession; then after all arrangements were made, perhaps lent him expense money for his travels, with reimbursement to be made by the congregation in Berbice. [18]

The Lutherans pledged liberal contributions for their church. The subscription list for the church building includes forty-eight names with a total pledged of 1,998 guilders. L. Abbensetts heads the list with a pledge of fifty guilders. A list for the pastor includes thirty-nine names with a total pledged of 998 guilders annually. L. Abbensetts heads that list with a pledge of thirty guilders annually. Another notation indicates a total of 2,723 guilders pledged annually for the pastor. Pages now missing apparently make up the rest. [19] Available records give no indication of degree of success in collecting pledges. Neither do they indicate whether the Lutheran pledges nor the Reformed Church taxes were receivable every year, or only at times when ministers' salaries were being paid.

This was a widely scattered congregation. The subscription list for the church building includes forty-eight names "besides those Lutherans resident in Canje." [20] The Canje River enters the Berbice River approximately at its mouth, while Fort Nassau, the headquarters of the congregation, was about eighty miles up the Berbice River. Plantations of Lutherans on the Berbice River were undoubtedly widely scattered above and below Fort Nassau.

## G — Significance of this Lutheran Presence

The Lutheran congregation established in Berbice was a self-supporting, confessional congregation of scattered settlers which was organised and maintained with lay initiative.

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17Mittelholzer, p. 314.

18Deductions based largely on records in "The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649-1772," (see Appendix I) together with the indications in the extant records of the Lutheran Church in Guyana.

19Subscription lists for pastor and church building, dates range from 1743 to 1752. Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana. (It is apparent that some pages are missing.)

20Ibid.

These colonists did not forget about their faith in this new land. Neither were they satisfied with participation in the Reformed Church, with which they had doctrinal differences. They would be satisfied with nothing but a congregation based on adherence to the unaltered Augsburg Confession. This was the tradition from which they had come and which they strove to maintain. These Dutch Lutherans did not feel that they had to wait for a pastor before organising a congregation. And their Dutch tradition taught them that one congregation could function alone as long as a sister congregation secured its pastors. They were not subdued by a church tax for the Reformed establishment which was about as large as the average pledge later made by them. They planned what they thought was right and boldly proceeded to see it accomplished.

Now that we have noted some of the more noble aspects of the formation of this congregation, let us consider some missing elements. 1) There is no evidence of any interest in the formation of any other congregation in addition to the one. 2) The Gospel was not shared with the slaves. 3) There was no interest in evangelizing the indigenous people.

Perhaps it was a common thing for Lutherans who left their homeland to be concerned about maintaining the practice of their faith as they knew it. Perhaps it was a rare thing for them to be concerned about sharing this faith with other peoples. Rare perhaps, but it happened.

In the early seventeenth century a wealthy young Lutheran baron named Justinianus Ernst von Welz proposed a foreign missionary society to be named "The Society of the Love of Jesus." This young nobleman was concerned about a matter that should have elicited great interest, but his fellow Lutherans at that time were not much concerned about sharing the Gospel with the outside world.

Von Welz was a layman. He did not plan to go himself. He pledged to send and support missionary pastors. People were spoken to. Pastors were interviewed. Circular letters were printed explaining the society and urging its support. The response was almost nil.

Von Welz, in desperation decided that if there was no pastor who would respond to his initiative, he, himself, would obey the Lord's command to go and preach the Gospel. In Holland he found a pastor who was at least concerned enough to encourage him and to give him an unofficial ordination.

The young baron sold home and estate and designated his wealth for a school to send out missionaries. Then in 1664 he sailed for Surinam, probably influenced in this direction by the Dutch pastor who ordained him. He sought to bring the Gospel to all the people there. He labored there about four years, until his death. Just where he worked in the land, how he died, where he was buried, these things we do not know.

But we know that he had a vision. How different the story of the Lutherans in Berbice would have been if they had brought with them such a glorious vision.

A Swedish pastor, John Campanius came in 1643 to New Sweden in North America as chaplain to the governor and also scattered Swedish and German settlers, indentured servants, and transported criminals. Beyond all this, he served as a missionary among the Deleware Indians and translated Luther's Small Catechism into their tongue.

Perhaps such examples were unknown to the Lutherans of Berbice, but there was Moravian work worthy of note in Berbice. Moravians arrived in Surinam in 1735 to work for the conversion of the Negroes and native Indians there. "A few years after, they built Pilgerruh, in the midst of a dense forrest, about 100 miles from the sea coast."[21]

Pilgerruh was on the Berbice River. In 1738 some of the brethren had come from Surinam to Berbice to extend their work. They were prohibited from evangelizing the slaves, so they settled where the Wiruni River flows into the Berbice and there became the first to preach the Gospel to the Amerindians in Berbice. They had forty-two acres at that location, which was near the place where the Reformed Church building for Berbice had been built, and where the Reformed pastor's residence was established after he was turned away from the governor's table. Moravians labored there until 1763, when their mission died in the slave revolt of that time.

These first Lutherans in Berbice brought with them the White Swan as a symbol of the Lutheran Church (see Appendix II). But the common legacy with the Moravians of this symbolism was not accompanied by a sharing in the Moravians' missionary spirit. Dutch colonists considered slaves to be property. Evangelization or education of slaves was considered subversive, in that such endeavors were likely to make them discontent. Amerindians were considered by them as valuable trading associates, messengers, guides, and policemen for runaway or rebellious slaves. They taught the American Indians Dutch, but not the Gospel. Lutheran colonists were no exception.

## H — High Death Rate as the Church Develops

The death rate was very high in Guiana in the early years of European colonization. In fact, it was not until the twentieth century, after the eradication of malaria, that the death rate fell markedly. We have already mentioned the early death of Von Welz in Surinam. About 200 years later on the West bank of the Demerara River one parish of the London Missionary Society was considered

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[21] **Historical Sketch of the Church and Missions of the United Brethren Commonly called Moravians** (Bethlehem, Pa., 1849), p. 84.

Total of ~~75~~ 57

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especially unhealthy. From 1830 to 1845 seven of their men died there.[22]

Still today there are legible grave stones from the eighteenth century at various places along the Berbice River indicating deaths at early ages.[23] At Fort Nassau, where the largest number are to be found, almost the only indication that the jungle was ever cleared is the presence of the grave stones.

Also the first two pastors of the Lutheran congregation in Berbice died after short periods of service. Their places of burial are not known to the church today.

The first pastor, Johan Henrik Faerkenius, arrived October 15, 1752, and died in Berbice December 5, 1754. Little information is available concerning his ministry:

> When the pastor finally arrived, there was still no church building. The Lutheran asked the colonial authorities for aid in erecting a church. They were refused, and they might have known that. So one of the congregation, Jan Reijnaut Rijmans (Reymers) came to the rescue, "who in the most handsome manner made an offer of his spacious mansion for the performance of Divine Services." Thus reads an historical sketch dated 1828. It seems that Rijmans at the time lived at Pln. Rustenburgh on the west bank of the river, not far below the present location of our . . . congregation at DeVelde. This would place the location of worship across the river and down about two miles from Fort Nassau, the seat of government and the place where Dominie Kendrick no doubt lived.
>
> Finally a Lutheran church was built at New Amsterdam. The date we do not know, but it must have been about 1754.[24]

> Having succeeded in building a church with their own funds at Fort Nassau, then the capital of the colony of Berbice, . . . . "they cheerfully allowed the use of their church to their brethren and fellow-Christians of the Reformed or established church, who had but one place of worship, situated at some distance from the town and higher up the river."[25]

If we know little about the ministry of the first pastor of the congregation, we know even less about the second. Johann Friderich Matthaus Groschner arrived in Berbice in May, 1756. He died there March 12, 1760.

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22J. Graham Cruickshank, Pages from the History of the Scottish Kirk in British Guiana (Georgetown, British Guiana, 1930), p. 99.

23See Kunkle, p. 14 for translations of epitaphs from grave stones at Fort Nassau and DeVelde.

24Kunkle, p. 18.

25Mittelholzer, p. 315. (Apparently quoting an old record).

## I — The Great Slave Revolt

February 23, 1763, is remembered as the date of the beginning of the great slave revolt in Berbice. There was no other slave uprising in Guiana, either before or after, to compare in magnitude with this revolt. Because of its historic importance, this date was preferred by the local government in negotiations concerning the date in 1966 that would mark independence from the British.

The population of Berbice in 1762 is listed at 4,423. This includes 346 whites, 244 Indians, and 3,833 Negro slaves.[26] The number listed for Indians undoubtedly includes only those Amerindians directly connected with the colony. Because of the policy of per capita taxation according to ownership of slaves, it is highly unlikely that the slave population was smaller than listed. There were more slaves in Berbice at that time than in Essequibo, and Demerara was newly colonized.

So much has been written concerning the evils connected with the institution of slavery that no one is surprised anymore to hear that the slaves at a certain time in a certain place launched a revolt. Concerning conditions in Berbice, one observer stated: "Divested of every right, a slave has no redress, not even against the bitterest wrongs: however oppressed, however injured, he has no resources, no means of relief."[27] General Netscher, Dutch historian writing in the eighteenth century described this Berbice slave revolt as "the mighty outbreak of the long bottled up anger and revenge of an uncivilised mass after suffering many years of maltreatment and injustice."[28]

Kunkle notes one of the inconsistencies of the situation:

> There was a strange contrast between slavery and its harshness on one hand, and a religiousness on the other. For example, in Demerara in 1756, every person who cursed in a tavern had to put four shillings in a locked box. If he refused, he was reported to the Director General. In 1757 one Jacques Salignac was fined twenty-five guilders for allowing cards and rum on Thanksgiving Day. And on all holy days no one was allowed to give strong drink to slaves.[29]

July 5, 1762, the prelude to the great revolt began

> . . . at Plantation Goodland on the upper Berbice. This was far up the river, possibly 130 miles from the mouth, several hours' travel beyond the present mission compound at Ituni, and also on the left bank of the river. The owner, Laurens Kunkler, was a member of the Berbice Council, and at the time was at Fort Nassau

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[26]Vere T. Daly, **A Short History of the Guyanese People**, (Georgetown, Guyana [1966]), p. 72.
[27]Ibid., p. 114. (Quoting Pinchard, **Letters from Guiana**, c. 1808).
[28]Ibid., p. 117.
[29]Kunkle, p. 27.

attending a meeting of the councillors. Thirty-six slaves on this estate and on Plantation Goed Fortuin on the opposite bank and a little lower down, also owned by Kunkler, revolted, set the house on fire, secured firearms and ammunition, and escaped into the bush. This was the beginning of the end of these two plantations, for by 1771 both were marked "abandoned" on maps and documents . . . .

The Berbice militia was called out and in the fighting that followed two of the revolting slaves were killed and five wounded. Several days later the remainder were lured from their barricade. Of these, the majority were killed in the skirmish, and of the prisoners, some were executed and some flogged.[30]

There was some communication between the Negroes of Surinam and those of Berbice, and the events in Surinam undoubtedly had considerable effect on what happened in Berbice.

To bad treatment and the indomitable spirit of freedom must be added the example of the Bush-Negroes of Surinam who in 1761 were able to extract a treaty from the Dutch authorities, giving them their freedom . . . Coffy [the leader of the revolt in 1763 in Berbice] asked for practically the same terms as Araby of Surinam.[31]

Bush-Negroes are described as

. . . mostly runaway slaves who have revolted from their masters, and have collected together in the forest, have there formed themselves into bodies, under certain captains or leaders; and have established various inhabitations and encampments in the thickest part of what is termed "the Bush."[32]

At one point, rebel leaders of the Bush-Negroes in Surinam were formally contacted by the Berbice colonial authorities to secure their advice concerning measures that might be taken to stop rebellions. They replied :

We desire to tell your governor and your court that in case they want to raise no new gangs of rebels they ought to take care that the planters keep a more watchful eye over their own property, and not to trust them so frequently in the hands of drunken overseers and managers, who by wrongfully and severely chastising the slaves, debauching their wives and children, neglecting the sick, etc., are the ruin of the colony, and wilfully drive to the woods such members of stout active people who by

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30Ibid., p. 27f.
31Daly, p. 118.
32Ibid., p. 116 (quoting Pinchard).

their sweat earn your subsistence without whose hands your colony must drop to nothing; and to whom at last, in this disgraceful manner, you are glad to come and sue for friendship. [33]

We must not suppose that the measures suggested above would have eliminated all of the more serious grievances. However, we cannot fail to note that absentee landlords were a special problem even then.

On February 23, 1763, the big rebellion in Berbice broke out in the Canje area under the leadership of Coffy, a house-slave who had been brought into the colony, and because of his intelligence had been taught coopering by his master. Estates in Canje were plundered and whites murdered. At the time of the outbreak, the governor, van Hoogenheim, was putting in a plea for assistance in feeding the slaves, claiming to have relieved the suffering of some by his personal help.

Coffy from the beginning rejected the idea of war. As we shall see, his strategy seems to have been to amass escaped slaves, organize them, then confront the whites and negotiate terms. But there were militant and violent dispositions in the ranks that he was not able to control.

By the beginning of March the rebellion had spread to the Berbice River, where the first plantations to be attacked were those of certain private planters who had been extremely cruel to their slaves. Plantation Juliana, which belonged to the widow of Berkey, was plundered and fired by the Africans, who captured the wife of Manager Dell, chopped off her head, and stuck it on a pole. From there their fury passed to Mon Repos, Essendam, Lilienburg, Elizabeth and Alexandria, Hollandia and Zeelandia. Perhaps because the last two estates were near to Fort Nassau, which they knew would have to be their ultimate objective, they were chosen as headquarters.

Meanwhile, the whites had rushed for all the places of safety —Fort St. Andries at the mouth of the River, Fort Nassau, a brick house on Pln. Peerboom, and the ships in the harbour.[34]

Abbenzetts, besieged at Solitude, tried to get relief. One of the ships in the river had some men and arms aboard, and he sent messages for their co-operation. But they would not help him, although he offered a cash inducement in addition to a prize of twenty-five guilders for each rebel captured or killed. Abbenzetts' own slaves remained faithful. [35]

On March 3 the Africans attacked Peerboom, their estimated number being 600. The whites [about 20] had turned the house into a virtual fortress, each window being defended, and the approaches strewed with broken glass. But this did not deter

[33] **Ibid.**, p. 117 (quoting M. O. Khan, Djuka).
[34] **Ibid.**, p. 119.
[35] Kunkle., p. 29.

the Africans who bombarded the building with hob-nails bound round with burning cotton. Soon the roof was afire; but the whites were prepared for this, and it was quickly extinguished. Followed a lull, broken by the loud voice of Cosala, the leader of the attack. He told them that the Africans had fourteen kegs of powder and that they were determined to take the estate. The whites held a hasty council. They knew of Van Hoogenheim's plan to send a recently-arrived slaveship to cover their retreat to the river with its guns, but the ship was nowhere in sight, and provision and water were running short. Master George, the Manager of Pln. Bearstyn, [the same person elected a Lutheran Elder in 1752?] addressed them, enquiring why they were treating the Christians in this manner. Cosala's reply was virtually a declaration of independence. He said that the Christians were too cruel to them and that they had decided that they would tolerate no more Christians or whites in their country . . . .

. . . after some negotiations the whites said the Africans agreed to let them go unharmed to their boats, but changed their minds and shot at them just as they were about to embark. Many were killed, many captured and just a few escaped. One of the prisoners was Madam George, whom Coffy took to wife. The Rev. Ramring, his wife and his sister were also captured. Numbered among the dead was Master Mittelholzer; among the escapees was Jan Broer, a mulatto, who obviously preferred to be with the whites.[36]

It may be that the negotiated settlement which was not honored was not a ruse, but an example of the difference over strategy, with Coffy insisting on negotiation while some of the troops were bent on destruction. Regardless, Coffy, who repeatedly declared over the months of the rebellion that he did not want war, at this time dramatically took advantage of the spoils.

At Fort Nassau, only van Hoogenheim, Abbenzetts, and one soldier wanted to defend the fort. The others clamoured for abandonment. Meanwhile Mrs. Schroeder, a prisoner taken at Peerboom, was released to deliver a letter to the governor. She reported that the Africans had set up a government with Coffy as head, and were gathering, obviously for an assault on Fort Nassau. The letter, from Coffy and Akara, his second in command, gave a warning and listed the chief offenders among the masters. There is little doubt that an assault on Fort Nassau at this time would have been successful. However, Coffy was more interested in a negotiated settlement like that in Surinam. (See above, p. 17) with the whites taking the coast and the blacks the interior. On March 8, van Hoogenheim gave in to those who wished to evacuate. As they left, they spiked the guns and set fire to the buildings.[37]

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[36]Daly, p. 119f.
[37]Ibid., p. 120f.

Van Hoogenheim was stalling the negotiations by asking for explanations on certain points and claiming the necessity of advice from overseas. In the meantime he set up defence headquarters at Dageraad, evacuated some colonists to Holland, and began to receive reinforcements. Gravesande, governor of Essequibo, not only sent troops but negotiated for an Amerindian attack on the Africans from the rear.

Akara became impatient and attacked Dageraad without Coffy's permission. Coffy was annoyed by the attacks and immediately sent another letter to van Hoogenheim saying :

> Coffy, Governor of the Negroes of Berbice, and Captain Akara send greetings to you Ex. and informs Your Ex. that he seeks no war, but if Your Ex. wants war, the Negroes likewise are ready. Barkey and his servant, de Graaf, Schooch, Dell, Van Lentzing, and Frederick Betgen, but more especially Mr. Barkey and his servant and de Graff, are the chief ones that are to be blamed for the evil that is taking place in Berbice. The Governor (meaning he, Coffy) has been present when it started to occur; he was angry that it commenced. The Governor of Berbice requests Your Ex. will come and speak with my people, but if Your Ex. will not come they will fight as long as there is a Christian in Berbice, the Governor shall give you half Berbice and they will go at once up country, but you must not think that the Negroes would be slaves again, but the Negroes that Your Ex. has on board ship, they can be your slaves.[38]

When Coffy was finally convinced of the futility of negotiations, there were considerably more formidable fortifications to contend with. An all out attack was made on May 13 by a force of about 2,000. The defenders numbered about 150, but had three armed ships in the river to aid. The attack was repelled, with the death toll eight whites and fifty-eight Africans. Just then, unknown to Coffy, there was an outbreak of dysentery, which had been troubling the whites. But there was disunity and dissension among the Negroes. Coffy and Akara were opposed by Atta, who was apparently the champion of those who wanted to fight and plunder, but not work.

> Though a house-slave was the leader, the house-slaves were on the whole averse to the Rebellion. There was also no great love between creole and African-born slaves. Then the situation was aggravated by tribal rivalry, between the Congo tribes, who had come from Angola, and the Ashanti and Dahomey tribes, who had come from Elmina on the Gold Coast. Fighting now broke out among them. When it wasn't Coffy's followers fighting Atta's, it was the Congo tribes fighting the Ashanti and Dahomey people, or the creoles fighting the new arrivals from Africa.

[38]Letter quoted in Daly, p. 122.

> But it was not only among the Africans that there was division and disunity. A company of white soldiers sent from Surinam to assist van Hoogenheim deserted and joined the Africans . . . . Some were immediately killed. When, however, they were brought to Coffy, he quite wisely put them to train his soldiers and to make gunpowder. In the later stages of the Rebellion, some of these white soldiers led small groups of Africans, and one group so led was quite successful in a skirmish against van Hoogenheim's men.[39]

A fight developed between the forces of Coffy and those of Atta in the struggle for leadership. Coffy lost, hid the ammunition, killed his followers, and shot himself. His mistress then returned to the white community. Akara survived, but defected, preferring slavery to Atta. Toward the end of the rebellion Akara was one of the leaders in an attack against the rebels. When Atta was captured and

> . . . brought before van Hoogenheim, he carried himself like the prince that he was in his native Africa, freely confessing that he was one of the leaders in the Rebellion.[40]

When the rebellion came to an end, the Negroes had been in control of Berbice for over ten months. One factor weighing heavily against the success of the rebellion was the assimilation of European culture by creoles, and especially mulattos, who were allowed to own estates. "Faithful" slaves were probably quite apprehensive about what their status might be in a revolutionary society.[41]

> The revolt almost at an end, the punishment of the rebels began, and forms an unsavory chapter in Guiana history. In the first batch of executions, fifteen were burnt at the stake, sixteen broken on the wheel, and twenty-two hanged. The governor tried to temper this, but spirits ran high and he was overruled. Later seventy-five more were executed, some of them in cruel ways . . . .
>
> By May of 1764 the insurrection was completely suppressed, but Berbice was almost ruined. Only 116 white people remained, over 200 having died, been killed, or fled the country. There had been dismal atrocities on both sides. In calling for harsh punishment and execution Abbenzetts was foremost, as he had been in defending the country against the rebels. The colony surgeon, captured by the slaves, was said to have been skinned alive. And we know that women and children did not go unmolested. The ugliest chapter in Guiana history was ended.[42]

Perhaps the ugliest part of the chapter is the manifestation of "Christianity" which the slaves had to face.

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39Daly, p. 124.
40Ibid., p. 125.
41Ibid.
42Kunkle, p. 29.

## J — After the Rebellion

As the colony was almost ruined, so the life of the Lutheran congregation dropped to a very low ebb. It was very likely in the bitterness of this period that a sign was posted in front of the Lutheran Church saying: "Slaves and dogs not allowed."[43]

The Rev. Salomon Fridericus Müller, the third Lutheran pastor, arrived in October, 1761, and fled the colony in April, 1763, during the early part of the rebellion.[44] The church records stated that he fled "without giving notice of his intention."[45]

It has been suggested in various articles and short summaries about the Lutheran Church in Berbice that there was something about the Lutheran church or the Lutheran pastor that caused the rebellious slaves to spare the Lutheran buildings when wreaking their havoc at Fort Nassau. However, this cannot be the reason that the buildings were spared; because, as we have noted, (see above, p. 19) it was the evacuating whites, not the rebel slaves, who burned buildings there.

After the departure of Pastor Müller in 1763, the congregation was without a pastor for a long time. The fourth pastor, the Rev. Jan Anthony Glendtkamp arrived in May of 1777.

It is not difficult to propose a reason for this delay. The financial condition was apparently such that the congregation was not able to guarantee a pastor's salary until some time had passed.

> About the year 1774, matters became very depressing, and the Lutherans were reduced to a condition almost similar to that experienced before 1743 . . . Indeed that same year, "the members of the vestry were obliged to bind their persons and goods by a formal deed, as a security for the payment of the minister's salary and the fulfillment of other stipulations," before the consistory in Amsterdam could be prevailed upon to engage and send them out a clergyman.[46]

After the razing of Fort Nassau, the established Reformed Church apparently continued to use the Lutheran Church at that location for worship. In addition:

> . . . .the Lutherans permitted their parsonage to be occupied as a temporary residence of the Governor, and the out-buildings as hospitals for the sick and wounded. For eleven years' use of their buildings the only consideration was that the government did not press them so much for arrears of acre-money.[47]

The necessity of supporting their own as well as the established church, the expense of bringing out from Holland clergymen who either died or broke contract in a short time, and the indigent circum-

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43One version of the sign is given in Crookall, p. 165.
44Kunkle, p. 18.
45White, p. 47.
46Mittelholzer, p. 317.
47Ibid., p. 315.

stances of many Lutherans after the slave revolt led to the establishment of what later became known as the Berbice Lutheran Fund.

It was in 1753 that the Lutheran community had first formally considered acquiring a plantation which, "by the blessing of God, may afford a more certain and permanent source of revenue for the support of their church and maintenance of a minister."[48]

In 1769 the colonial court was petitioned for a grant of 500 acres, the usual size of a plantation, but the acre-tax of 10 florins per acre was too much to pay.

The matter was reopened in 1774, and Messrs. H. J. Buse, P. Schwetzer, and Nelis Anderson were the vestry members entrusted with the matter. At this time permission was given to pay the acre-tax over a ten-year period. The estate known as Die Kleine Maripaan was secured July 22, 1778, and later called Plantation Augsburg. The location is on the west bank of the Berbice, not far below the present village of Fearn.[49]

> Mr. Botger, an elder of their church, and living near the spot, undertook to lay out the land and put it into cultivation gratis, in the carrying out of which labour he was after his death succeeded by a fellow member, Mr. Heilen, and on the name disinterested principle.[50]

Pastor Glendtkamp left the colony in January, 1779. This made him the second pastor in succession to leave the charge within twenty months after arriving. The available records give no clue concerning the cause of his departure, but he was engaged for a period of six years.[51] Shortly after his departure:

> The slaves, who had been serving as domestics to the Rev. Mr. Glendtkamp, their late minister, were sent to the estate and employed in the cultivation of the soil, with others who were hired for the purpose.[52]

The acre-money was difficult to meet at times, and on one occasion Mr. Janch, together with brother vestry members, paid the money out of personal funds. But the coffee plantation of the Lutheran community soon became a financial success. More slaves were purchased and 15,000 guilders were borrowed for the purchase of the estate. In 1784 the estate was appraised at a value of 32,667 florins (or guilders). But hard times came again, and in 1790 the colony took legal action against the Lutheran Church for being in arrears in the acre-money.

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48Ibid., p. 317.
49Kunkle, p. 21.
50Mittelholzer, p. 317, (apparently quoting an old record).
51Kunkle, p. 18.
52Ibid., p. 21, (apparently quoting an old record).

When permission was given for the Lutheran Church to organize in 1743, one stipulation was that

> . . . all persons presenting free coloured children for baptism were required to sign an engagement that these children should never become a charge to the community or to the public.[53]

During the times of financial difficulty, the Lutherans applied for permission to put an alms-box in the tavern as the Reformed Church did. This was refused. But the Lutherans still had to pay the poor tax, which the alms-box offerings supplemented, without being eligible for its benefits.[54]

From 1779 apparently until about 1818 the Lutheran congregation in Berbice was without a pastor. The combined service of the first four ministers totalled less than ten years.

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[53]White, p. 45.
[54]Ibid., p. 49.
Kunkle, p. 22.

## CHAPTER II

# SLAVERY SUCCUMBS

# 1781 — 1841

## THE KIND EAGLE

Martin Carter

I make my dance right here!
Right here on the wall of a prison I dance!
This world's hope is a blade of fury
And we, who are sweepers of an ancient sky,
Discoverers of a new planet — sudden stars
We are the world's hope —
And so therefore, I rise again, I rise again,
Freedom is a white road with green grass like love.

Out of my time I carve a monument,
Out of a jagged block of convict years I carve it.
The sharpknife of dawn glitters in my hand
But how bare is everything — tall tall tree
Infinite air, the unrelaxing tension of the world
And only hope, hope only, the kind eagle soars and wheels in flight.

I dance on the wall of prison!
It is not easy to be free and bold!
It is not easy to be poised and bound!
It is not easy to endure the spike!
So river flood, drown not my pillar feet!
So river flood, collapse to estuary;
Only the heart's life, the kind eagle soars and wheels in flight.

After a period of political instability, uninterrupted British rule began in 1803. Soon afterward, through the London Missionary Society, the evangelization of the slaves began. This was so distasteful to most of the planters that, at the time of a slave uprising, they made a scapegoat of a missionary, seeing him condemned to death. As the planters failed to prevent the Christian instruction of the slaves, they next attempted to control it. The church favored by the planters in each district was given financial aid, and the evangelization of the slaves proceeded rapidly on this basis.

The Lutheran Church in Berbice had been marking time during a long period without a pastor. When a Lutheran pastor first initiated work among the slaves, after virtually all the other churches in the three colonies were doing so, his vestry so opposed this move that they removed him from that pastorate.

Then as the great day of freedom came clearly into view, the slaves danced on the wall of prison, facing the uncertainties of the future with great hope. In the ironies of the times, the slaves owned by the Lutheran Church had to await the British Government's decision for abolition before they could hear the Gospel freely from their owners.

## A — British Rule Begins

In 1803 the British took control of the colonies of Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara, which were soon to become British Guiana. This control was maintained for an uninterrupted period of 163 years.

In the previous two decades the colonies had been bandied about in the complex political and economic maneuvering connected with the War for American Independence. The colonies were captured by the British in 1781, then by the French in 1782. They were returned to the Dutch in 1784, then recaptured by the British in 1796. The British returned them to the Dutch in 1802, then made their final invasion in 1803.

The original Dutch settlements had all been some miles up the rivers. However, by 1803 the migration of the colonists to the coastal area was virtually complete, most of the inhabited coastal lands having been empoldered, or reclaimed from the sea, as in The Netherlands.

In connection with this migration, Fort Nassau and its accompanying village, New Amsterdam, location of the Lutheran Church in Berbice, were abandoned. The new town of New Amsterdam was planned for a site at the mouth of the Berbice River by the French in 1783. The land was apparently cleared from 1785 to 1790.[1] In 1790 the Lutheran Church made application for the land in New Amsterdam which it presently occupies. The application was granted January 16, 1795.[2] By 1803 a church building had been erected there. A tradition in the church has it that the original building was reconstructed at the new site.

The religious situation of these colonies when the British resumed control in 1803 is described as follows :

> "At this time," it is said in the Local Guide of British Guiana, "there were only two churches in this Colony, one a Lutheran Church, richly endowed, in Berbice; the other, a Dutch Reformed Church on Fort Island." These churches were about 100 miles distant from each other, and the services of their ministers were sacred to the use, not of the 150,000 slaves which the Colony then contained, but of their masters.
>
> On the occupation of this country by the British, a chaplain . . . read the prayers of the Church of England in a small room in the Old Courthouse, Georgetown, . . . . the black people used to be driven from the door, when any of them ventured to look in upon the few — sometimes not more than six worshippers there assembled.[3]

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[1]Daly, p. 101f.

[2]Documents, Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana. (The documents are probably translated excerpts used in litigation in 1874-1875.)

[3]Edwin Angel Wallbridge, The Demerara Martyr—Memoirs of the Rev. John Smith, Missionary to Demerara, Preface by the Rev. W. G. Barrett (London, 1848. Reissued, Preparatory Note by J. Graham Cruickshank, Georgetown, 1943), p. 31.

In 1805 a Wesleyan missionary from the small Caribbean island, Dominica, visited Demerara to establish a mission. He told Governor Beaujon that he was "a missionary of the Methodist connexion, and that his design was to instruct the Negroes in the principles of Christianity." The Governor replied that if that was what he had come to do, he must go back. He asked the Governor whether he might call upon him another time. The Governor answered strongly in the negative.[4]

Up to this time, no missionaries were permitted to evangelize the slaves in the three colonies; and apparently no attempts had been made to evangelize the Amerindians except the abortive mission of the Moravians, 1738-1763.

In 1803 the pastorate of the Lutheran Church in Berbice had apparently been vacant for 24 years and was apparently to remain vacant for another 15 years. A note by L. C. Abbensetts shows that in September, 1802, Pastor L. H. A. Meyer visited Berbice, but regrettably did not conduct any public worship service.[5]

However, congregational meetings were held during the long pastoral vacancy; and it may be assumed that worship services were also held. In 1813 certain members of the congregation complained to the governor that there were irregularities in the affairs of Plantation Augsburg and that there had been no success in attempts to discover the state of the funds of the congregation, no general accounting having been made since 1802.[6] An account of the period 1802-1813 was required by the government and was given.[7]

English became the official language of these colonies in 1812. In 1814, in connection with the end of the War of 1812, Britain returned some Dutch colonies, but gave compensation in order to retain Essequibo-Demerara and Berbice.[8]

## B — Evangelization of Slaves Begins

The close of the 18th century was a time of prosperity with the number of slaves increasing fast. In Berbice alone the number of slaves increased from 8,232 in 1796 to 17,885 in 1802.[9] Planters generally considered it terribly subversive to teach slaves to read and write or to teach them Christianity.

Liberal voices were being heard, however, and the British slave trade was abolished in 1807.[10] About that same time Hermanus H.

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4Ibid., p. 33.

5Document including signatures of acceptance of rules of operation for congregations of the Augsburg Confession in the Netherlands, 1686 edition. Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana.

6Letter: J. A. Hicken and others to Gov. Robert Gordon, 1 April 1813. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

7Letter: Governor's Secretary to College of Assessors of the Lutheran Church in Berbice and related documents, 1813. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

8Daly, p. 90ff.

9Ibid., p. 100.

10Raymond T. Smith, **British Guiana** (London, 1962), p. 30.

Post, a native Dutch planter who had become a British subject, wrote to the London Missionary Society, an interdenominational society organised in 1795, asking for a minister to instruct his slaves. The Rev. John Wray was sent, arriving at Stabroek (renamed Georgetown in 1812) in February, 1808. Facilities were provided for him on Post's plantation, Le Resouvenir, seven miles east of Stabroek. Post "was looked upon with dislike by most of his fellow-planters as a fool and a madman" for providing a minister for his slaves.[11] Wray recognized the peculiar nature of his situation in a letter to the London Missionary Society :

> It is a very difficult thing to get the confidence both of Master and Slave, and more especially when a missionary has to live on an Estate. It is also extremely important to the Colony : one wrong step among the slaves may cost the lives of hundreds of the Colonists. A great deal of wisdom, prudence, patience, perseverance and coolness under contempt and ridicule are necessary to be among Slaves . . . A missionary to the Negroes is looked upon as little less degraded than they are.[12]

However, Wray was very much appreciated by the slaves as well as by Post. Writing on Wray's work to a friend, Post says : "Drunkards and fighters are changed into sober and peaceable people, and endeavor to please those who are set over them."[13] Post sent to the London Missionary Society for a second worker. The Rev. John Davies arrived in January, 1809, about two months before Post's death, to work as a school teacher in Stabroek. He also was quite cautious in his approach, having recorded this analysis : "It is highly requisite for missionaries to act with prudence and to stand at the greatest distance from any interference with the political state of the Negro."[14]

In 1812-13 Wray visited Berbice, reporting that in that colony, "There are two clergymen — one, a Church of England minister, who preaches in a room under his dwelling; and a Dutch clergyman living on his plantation up the river, but who, on the Sabbath, comes to town and preaches in a similar room."[15]

In 1813 Wray transferred his residence and his work to Berbice. He is described as the ideal person to begin a mission among the slaves in that colony where slavery was so deeply ingrained :

> He was kind and conciliatory. Where he thought he could act with advantage to the slave he did so, and when he could not, by his friendly advice and sympathy he assisted the oppressed bondsman to endure patiently what he might deem to be most unjust, but at the time inevitable.[16]

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[11] Wallbridge, p. 35.
[12] **Ibid.**, p. iv.
[13] **Ibid.**, p. 37.
[14] **Ibid.**, p. iv.
[15] Thomas Rain, **The Life and Labours** of John Wray (London, 1892), p. 89.
[16] **Ibid.**, p. 99.

Other church groups also began to work among the slaves. In 1815 a Methodist pastor arrived in Georgetown to take up work which had been carried on by laymen from Nevis. A petition to the Sheriff regarding these laymen had stated that it is "unpardonable for a black man to hold public meetings for worship and to be a setter forth of strange doctrines." [17]

In 1818 St. Andrew's, a congregation of the Church of Scotland, formed of colonists from that land, was opened in Georgetown. Pastor Archibald Browne arrived that year and followed the example of the London Missionary Society. By 1821 he had admitted 55 slaves. By this time "even the Anglican priest in Georgetown was conducting services for slaves."[18]

### C — The Demerara Martyr

Efforts to evangelize the slaves were not without planter opposition :

> There were many whites who made life difficult for the missions, by interrupting services, throwing stones at the churches, prohibiting the ministers from entering certain plantations, refusing to build chapels on plantation land, and so on. But on the whole they were not badly treated in comparison with their fellow workers in other parts of the West Indies. [19]

If it is true that missionaries to the slaves in this area were not treated badly, comparatively speaking, then there was one notable exception. The Rev. John Smith the next to be sent by the London Missionary Society to Plantation Le Resouvenir after the transfer of Pastor Wray, arrived in February of 1817. He was to bear the brunt of the disaffection of the planters.

Included in the instructions which Smith received in December of 1816 from the London Missionary Society were words of advice indicative of the missiology of all denominations working among the slaves of Guiana at that time :

> Not a word must escape you in public or private, which might render the slaves displeased with their Station. You are not sent to relieve them from their servile condition, but to afford them the consolations of religion, and to enforce upon them the necessity for being subject 'not only for wrath but for conscience sake.' (Romans 13, 5, and 1 Peter 2, 19.)
>
> The Holy Gospel which you preach will render the Slaves who receive it the more diligent, faithful, patient, and useful Servants, will render severe discipline unnecessary, and make them the most valuable Slaves on the Estates, and thus you will recommend yourself and your Ministry even to those Gentlemen who may

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17Cruickshank, p. 35.
18Smith, p. 34.
19Ibid.

have been averse to the religious instruction to the Negroes. We are well assured that this happy effect has already been produced in many instances, and we trust you will be the honoured instrument of producing many more.[20]

Smith was also surely counselled by his fellow laborers to be most prudent in all matters that might stir up the ire of the planters or encourage discontent among the slaves. But one of his fellow workers remembered him as strong willed, refusing to appreciate any point of view but his own.[21] It is clear that Smith could not appreciate the prevalent view of complacency toward the sufferings of the slaves. On July 14, 1818, he noted in his journal : " . . . I could not help thinking that the time is not far distant when the Lord will make it manifest by some signal judgement that he hath heard the cry of the oppressed. Exodus iii. 7 & 8."[22]

After his death it was stated of him in Parliament by the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies :

> Mr. Smith was an individual of good intention, and of a pure and spotless character, but not . . . a man of sound discretion who could be safely trusted in the delicate situation of a Missionary.[23]

However, Smith seems to have sincerely attempted to work within the system with all its strictures. For example, no slave was baptized without a recommendation from his master. One such follows :

> Dear Sir : The bearer, B . . . has made application to me to request you to baptize him. His character and conduct are now such, that I can with confidence and much pleasure recommend him to your notice. And I feel convinced that, after such examination and instruction as you may judge necessary, he will not be found the least deserving of your candidates. As he is a leading man on this plantation, this may probably be one step towards the fulfillment of your wishes with the rest.
>
> This is great encouragement, when we reflect what this man was before he heard the gospel . . . he confessed that he had been a drunkard, a swearer, a thief . . .[24]

The above recommendation may have been from a neighboring plantation. Smith entered in his journal February 9, 1821, that the Manager disturbed the services the previous Sunday by shaking the seals on his watch chain, adding :

> . . . he mostly comes to chapel either to play or to sleep. The behaviour of most of the whites is so unbecoming in a place of worship, that I sometimes wish they would not come at all.[25]

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20 Wallbridge, p. v.
21 Ibid., p. x.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. xxvi.
24 Ibid., p. 46.
25 Ibid., p. 85.

At the time of Smith's arrival, slaves were forbidden by law to marry. However, in February, 1823, he reports for the previous year : 114 marriages, 61 communing members, 203 total members, and an average congregation of 800.[26] Smith was getting a large and increasing response from the slaves, but he was conservative in his practices of baptizing them and receiving them into membership.

In England, early in 1823, Parliament passed resolutions for the amelioration of the conditions of slaves in Crown colonies. Governor Beard of Berbice issued a proclamation and asked Pastor Wray to explain the contents of the Order in Council from his pulpit. However, in Demerara, Governor Murray and the Court of Policy were taking a more studied approach. The slaves became convinced that the local officials were withholding from them rights granted by Britain. A rebellion occurred, beginning at Plantation Le Resouvenir and an adjoining plantation. It was quickly suppressed. Mass executions followed. Bodies were displayed in chains. Heads were mounted on spikes.[27]

During the rebellion, the Anglican clergyman in Georgetown, W. S. Austin went to the Governor and proposed that he and Smith go among the slaves to try to persuade them to return to work. The offer was refused.

Also during the rebellion :

> The Wesleyan Minister then residing in Georgetown, The Rev. John Mortier, in the excessive exuberance of his loyalty, went to the Government House and offered to assume the soldiers' red coat, and do duty as a militia man. His services were however declined . . .[28]

The revolt had broken out on Sunday, August 17, 1823. On Thursday, August 21, Pastor John Smith was arrested. He was charged with being an instigator, advisor, and consultant in the rebellion. He pleaded not guilty. His trial lasted twenty-four days. The most serious accusations that were supportable against him were that he had known of the impending storm and had said nothing (it was common knowledge), and that he had received Quamina, his chief deacon, who was implicated in the rebellion, in the manse on the day after the outbreak and had let him go. However, he was judged guilty and sentenced to be hanged, but recommended for mercy. In England, the official report, which was approved by the King on February 14, 1824, stated that the charges were not substantiated criminally and that banishment should be substituted for the judgements. However, the conditions of imprisonment were not salutary and Smith had died of a pulmonary complaint a few days earlier on February 6.

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[26]Ibid., p. 75.
[27]Smith, p. 35f.
[28]Wallbridge, p. 115.

At the time of the trial, Anglican Pastor Austin said that Smith's preaching of the Gospel had caused the slaves to shun bloodshed, saving the lives of those who would take his. For befriending Smith and giving evidence in his favor, Austin brought upon himself the wrath of the planters and was persecuted by them until he left the colony.[29]

**D — The Rebellion's Aftermath**

The feeling was running strong in Demerara that further steps would have to be taken to keep the slaves under control. In an unusual display of warped enlightenment, the editor of the "Colonist," the organ of the planters, a few days after the death of Smith, wrote:

> The Missionary system in fact, is undermining the institutions, and endangering the political existence of the Colonies. It is most unfortunate for the cause of the planters that they did not speak out in time. They did not say as they ought to have said, to the first advocate of missions and education—"We have no desire to treat the Africans with undue rigor, but we cannot be ignorant that our power over them can exist only so long as we are more highly educated and enlightened." We are few — they are many — and if their moral qualities, or education be allowed to be made equal, it follows that the power of government, or the right of government, which is the same thing, will be determined by the amount of physical force.[30]

A general meeting of the white population was held in Georgetown with twenty-five resolutions passed, among them one which specifically condemned the London Missionary Society and sought a law prohibiting admission of their preachers into the Colony. The form which this effort took was that :

> . . . the Court of Policy passed an Ordinance granting state aid to the Church selected by a majority of the planters in each district. Smith's chapel at Le Ressouvenir was seized and used by the Anglican Church.[31]

White seems to capture accurately the mood of the plantocracy in relation to the London Missionary Society :

> In 1824 there was a movement put on foot to exclude them from the Colony and establish a "sufficient supply of safe men" of regularly ordained state-church clergymen . . . whose position as paid servants of the State should be a security for their good behaviour.[32]

Even the comparatively liberal planter Hermanus Post, who was in the vanguard of those calling for better treatment for the slaves

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[29]Daly, p. 247.
[30]Wallbridge, p. 213.
[31]Smith, p. 37.
[32]White, p. 39.

and who had brought in the London Missionary Society, did not wish to have the slaves taught to read.[33]

So it was that in 1826 the Colony of Essequibo-Demerara was divided into twelve parishes, seven Church of England and five Church of Scotland, with salary for a clergyman for each provided from taxes. Then ten years later the same provision was made for six parishes in Berbice, three Church of England and three Church of Scotland. Despite the situation, slaves flocked to these churches. In 1825 one Church of Scotland pastor reported: "My place of worship, which holds about 1,000, does not contain the half of those who come."[34] Slaves, who had been kept away from Christian worship services for so long, were gathering in large numbers to hear whatever preacher came among them.

Though not assigned any parish, the Methodists also received state aid from 1824. They grew quickly then to reach a membership of 3,000 by 1829.[35] Provisions were also made early for state aid for the Roman Catholic Church and for a Dutch Reformed clergyman. The Roman Catholics were soon to become second only to the Church of England as recipients of state aid, although they had no priest in Essequibo-Demerara or Berbice in 1825.

### E — Lutheran Pastorate Again Filled

Domine Rudolph Scheffer served as pastor of the Lutheran Church in Berbice for a period ending in August of 1822.[36] Apparently he was the fifth pastor sent from Amsterdam. If he served for one term of four years, he would have arrived in 1818. Prior to his coming, it seems that no pastor served the congregation since the departure of Pastor Glendtkamp in 1779. This would mean that the congregation had four pastors serving a combined total of less than ten years of existence, then no pastor for the next thirty-nine years. We do not know why the congregation was without a pastor for so long, but we do know that the ownership of the colony was quite unsettled most of the time from 1781 to 1814.

Evidently the complexion of the congregation was changing, because in July, 1821, its officers wrote to the Lutheran congregation in Paramaribo asking advice concerning whether colored people and Negroes could be members of the church and officers of the vestry. No answer was received, but in 1834 colored people were allowed to become members of the vestry of the congregation in Paramaribo, Surinam.[37]

In February, 1825, the Rev. Johannes Vos arrived from Amsterdam as pastor of the Lutheran Congregation in Berbice. In Novem-

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[33]Daly, p. 253.
[34]Cruickshank, p. 22.
[35]A. S. McDonald, "A Divided Church in a Divided Nation: British Guiana" (Unpublished thesis, New York City 1960) p. 99.
[36]Cash Book of the Lutheran Church in Berbice, 1820, and 1822-1824. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.
[37]Kunkle, p. 39.

ber, 1826, he informed the Protector that he intended to begin the instruction of slaves in the Christian Religion.[38] David Power, H.M. Protector of Slaves, showed sympathetic appreciation for the work that Vos was doing.[39] However, in spite of the fact that virtually all of the Christian groups in the colonies of Berbice and Essequibo-Demerara were now working to evangelize the slaves, the vestry of the Lutheran congregation did not approve of such activities by their pastor.

In October, 1828, Vos made a formal complaint to the government that while he was marrying slaves at Pln. Catharinasburg, Upper Canje, a meeting of the Lutheran vestry was deliberately held in his absence dismissing him as pastor of the congregation as of April 3, 1829. His complaint states that his engagement in Amsterdam, October 18, 1824, stipulated that he was to give notice after three years and six months whether he wishes to return to Europe. He considers his second term of four years to be automatic because of lack of notice of intent to leave. If impeded from functioning as pastor after April 3, 1829, he will use legal procedures to maintain his position as pastor. He claims that no instance can be cited in which he has neglected or refused to do his duty as minister of his church. Further, the vestry members have quickly called clandestine meetings for their own purposes. But they plead the difficulty of attendance of River members whenever the pastor has some concern to be considered. Such acts Vos does not consider to be of those who wish to promote the propagation and maintenance of Religion. He therefore requests action on his complaint by the colonial government.[40]

A few days earlier, Power, H. M. Protector of Slaves, had written the governor defending Vos' work among the slaves.[41]

There was also a difference between Vos and his vestry on a related matter. Probably sometime in 1828 several "coloured and free black members" of the Lutheran congregation wrote the governor. In the letter, claiming to have been confirmed by the Rev. R. Scheffer, deceased, and J. Vos, in company with European Lutherans without distinction, they plead the right to attend and vote at all meetings. At a recent election they were debarred. R. Hart, a European member, challenged this. The answer: "No coloured person has the right to interfere in the affairs relating to the Church on the assumed ground of illegitimacy." A serious difference is said to exist on this matter between the minister and vestry, who reject persons on the basis of physical complexion. Noting that such per-

[38]See White, p. 50.

[39]Six letters: David Power to Johannes Vos, 1828. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

[40]"Insinuation and Protest of Rev. J. Vos against the Lutheran Vestry, Berbice 11 October: 1828." Document, Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

[41]Letter: David Power to Governor Beard, 6 October 1828. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

sons can vote in public affairs, the petitioners request an inquiry and redress.[42]

Apparently the government did not intervene in the matter of Vos' dismissal. He left in 1829 and his successor arrived in March of 1830. This was the shortest period of time that the congregation had been without a pastor since its organization.

However, the government did intervene in the matter of the eligibility of colored persons to participate in the affairs of the congregation. Investigation was made, and in 1830 official notice was given of consent to the voting of colored members of the Lutheran Congregation.[43]

Vos was apparently not willing to let matters rest, concerning the slaves. In August of 1829 he wrote to the Scribe of the Lutheran congregation enclosing a glowing report of the Christianization of the slaves in Barbados, describing how beneficial this was considered by the planters there.[44]

The Rev. H. W. P. Junius served the Lutheran Church in Berbice from March, 1830, to April, 1841.[45] He was the last of the Dutch pastors who served the congregation.

In 1832 the Lutheran Church building in Paramaribo burned down. The Lutheran Church in Berbice sent gifts of 1,744 and 2,000 guilders in 1833 to assist in the rebuilding.

### F — Slavery Abolished

In 1831, Berbice and Essequibo-Demerara were joined to form the colony of British Guiana. The population at this time was 98,000: 86,950 slaves, 7,521 free colored and black, and 3,529 white.[46]

In the British Parliament humanitarians such as William Wilberforce and Thomas Buxton were leading the attack against slavery. There were also economic sources opposing slavery on principles of self interest. The combined weight was more than the institution could bear. Manumission had been the answer for some, for example :

> Berbice, 25 April 1819. Received from the woman Catherine by the hands of Miss Elizabeth Outerbridge the sum of seven hundred guilders in full payment of herself and will warrant and defend the said woman Catherine against any claim whatsoever.[47]

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42Letter : M. La Rose, (and eight others) to Governor Henry Beard. Archives : Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

43Letter : Franzen (to government authorities) 1830. Archives : Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

44Letter : J. Vos to J. F. Schwartz, Scriba, August; 1829. Enclosure : "1823 Plan of the Codrington Estates in Barbados," The Rev. J. H. Pindar S.P.G. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

45Baptismal record book of the Lutheran Church in Berbice, 1830-1890 Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

46Rain, p. 375.

47Document : Guyana Museum, Georgetown.

However, the entire institution of slavery was to be scrapped. In 1833 the British Parliament passed an 'Act for the abolition of slavery throughout the British Colonies . . .' which provided for apprenticeship, a type of semi-slavery, beginning 1 August 1834. Full emancipation came 1 August 1838.[48] Part of this act of 1833 provided funds for the religious and moral education of Africans. In British Guiana :

> By this time the planters had become convinced that in the education of the ex-slave lay the greatest hope for their continued domination and they willingly voted large sums of money to augment the funds of the British Government. But of course the greater portion of these funds was given to the Established Churches whose ministers worked zealously to justify the confidence placed in them.[49]

During these years of semi-slavery the doors of the Lutheran congregation were opened wide to the "apprentices." On January 17, 1836, Pastor Junius baptized 47 persons, most of them apprentices on Plantation Augsburg. In the full month of January there were 188 baptisms, mostly of apprentices. In his full eleven years' pastorate, Pastor Junius baptized 793 persons.[50]

At emancipation the planters of British Guiana received £4,297,117 10s. 6½d. compensation for 84,915 slaves. Just before that time the average price of a slave was £114 11s. Compensation was £51 17s. each. The Lutheran Church in Berbice received compensation of £9,316 1s. for slaves of Plantation Augsburg, and with the money purchased shares of the British Guiana Bank.[51] This would mean previous possession of about 180 slaves. As an illustration of planter wealth, Mr. Wolfart Katz, who lived in a fine mansion on Plantation Vryheid, received £63,500 compensation. For comparison, the Lutheran pastors who served in the colony in the period received an annual salary of just under £600. Nothing at all was given to the slaves for their years of labor.[52]

## G — Last Dutch Pastor Departs

In April of 1841, Pastor Junius was granted the following pension and severance benefits : payment of all his debts if no more than the 10,000 guilders stated by him, 4,000 guilders pension in four annual payments as long as he does not take up other work with the balance to his widow and children if he dies, and 500 guilders per year for the four years "as a further proposition on the prayer of the Rev. Gentleman."[53] (Rate of exchange from 1813, 12 guilders to

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48Smith, p. 38.
49Daly, p. 257f.
50Baptismal record book, of the Lutheran Church in Berbice . . .
51Letter : G. F. Schwartz to W. A. Lynch, 3 December 1875. Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.
52Smith, p. 38. Kunkle, p. 34. Cash Book of Lutheran Church in Berbice... Daly, p. 144.
53Minutes of the Vestry of the Lutheran Church in Berbice, 3 April 1841. Translated extract, Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

£1.) [54] Possible reasons for this generosity include the fact that Pastor Junius' service of 11 years is long in comparison with the aggregate service of about eighteen years of the six previous pastors and the fact that the congregation was at this time in possession of considerable funds.

The ministry of Pastor Junius was somewhat restricted by his lack of facility in English in a land in which English was becoming the language of the entire population. Pastor John Wray, the first missionary of the London Missionary Society, who was still serving in Berbice at that time, speaks of assisting Pastor Junius in a wedding. Wray says that he led the devotional portion of the service at the request of Junius because Junius understood little English. [55]

Coincidentally, of the many congregations established under Pastor Wray, the ones at the following places later came into the Lutheran Church : Germania, Fearn and Maria Henrietta.

54Daly, p. 229f.
55Rain, p. 312.

## CHAPTER III

# THE OLD AND THE NEW
# 1841 — 1876

## THERE RUNS A DREAM

A. J. SEYMOUR

There runs a dream of perished Dutch plantations
In these Guiana rivers to the sea.

Black waters, rustling through the vegetation
That towers and tangles banks, run silently
Over lost stellings where the craft once rode
Easy before trim dwellings in the sun
And fields of indigo would float out broad
To lose the eye right on the horizon.

These rivers know that strong and quiet men
Drove back a jungle, gave Guiana root
Against the shock of circumstance, and then
History moved down river, leaving free
The forest to creep back, foot by quiet foot
And overhang black waters to the sea.

With the end of slavery many traditions and institutions introduced by the Dutch and sustained under the British were in jeopardy. Some survived. Some succumbed. The recently freed slaves were pooling their resources, buying land, and establishing villages. The planters were using every conceivable means to provide themselves with an abundant supply of cheap labor. Portuguese, Chinese, and East Indians were brought in large numbers to work as indentured servants on the plantations. Old relationships with the Amerindians gave way to new. The Lutheran Church in Berbice seemed like a lost stelling[1], about to topple into the river and float out to sea, when the government intervened to save it.

[1]Pier.

## A — The Post Slavery Afro-Guianese

After August 1, 1838, the relationship between planter and former slave was highly colored by the previous condition of servitude. Among those who had experienced slavery it was commonly felt that almost any other alternative was superior to renewed subjection to the planters. The plantocracy was run on the premise that the Negroes had a moral obligation to labor industriously on the plantations; and that if they did not, stringent counter measures were justified.

In Surinam at this time there were thriving settlements of Bush Negroes, who still today form a separate culture within the colony. But in British Guiana Amerindians were hired to combat the Bush Negroes, and they were limited to fugitive bands. Wray speaks of a servant, Antoinette, captured by Bush Negroes, then brought back in 1834 after 11 years of captivity.[2] The end of slavery was apparently also the end of the Bush Negro movement in British Guiana, as there was no longer any reason for the fugitives to hide.

Another segment of the population was the free colored.

> The free-Coloured were mostly the offspring of slave women and white men, and were usually manumitted by their fathers and not infrequently sent to Europe to be educated . . . They formed a majority of the militia in Berbice for example . . . Free women of colour were much in demand as concubines, sometimes being brought out from Barbados . . .[3]

The above presents less sordid aspects of the situation in which there was created a class of free people of color. Distinctions were made which not only survived the end of slavery, but remain today in prejudice based on a person's skin shade.

As the former slaves tried to make their way in this society, some purchased idle plantations, built homes there, and cultivated the land. This was the most promising way open to them. As early as November, 1839, eighty-three laborers, including five women, jointly purchased Plantation Northbrook for $10,000 (B.G.), renaming it Victoria. In the next few months, a number of other estates were similarly purchased, including New Orange Nassau, which was renamed Buxton, after the member of the British Parliament who introduced the motion for emancipation. Buxton is the birthplace of many prominent Guyanese of today, but it was also the site of much activity during racial riots in recent years.

By 1841 planters were exploiting the desire of their former slaves to buy land. In that year a District Stipendiary Magistrate advised Africans against the purchase of Plantation Vigilance for $90,000 as it was obvious that the price was too exorbitant. They instead bought Plantation Friendship for $80,000, a better price as it had last sold for

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[2]Rain, p. 132f., 245.
[3]Smith, p. 27.

$50,000.[4] In contrast a list of eleven plantations in British Guiana sold in 1840 shows the average price to be 52% of pre-emancipation value, with prices dropping rapidly thereafter.[5] Booker Bros. began its expansion in these post-emancipation years by buying up plantations which came on the market at very low prices. The company currently controls about 80% of the country's sugar output and operates some 30 subsidiary companies in Guyana.[6]

Some planters, in order to keep laborers more available, divided the front lands of their plantations into lots and sold them to Africans.[7]

So by purchasing plantations and by purchasing clusters of lots from plantations, the Africans established villages. It is amazing that they had the amount of money required to make such transactions. It was a source of amazement at the time. Part of the money had been accumulated during the four years of apprenticeship, when the slaves were paid for overtime work. Part had been accumulated even from the days of full slavery through the sale of provisions. Each male slave was given a patch of ground on which he was to cultivate food for himself and his family. Any surplus could be marketed.[8]

> The period of establishment of the free Negro villages was from 1838 to 1852. After that year there was very little expansion in the area of Negro settlement, and it had also become evident that the villagers were not becoming an independent peasantry living off the products of their own land; instead they depended on wage labour to a great extent, and only a minority were able to live completely off the produce of their farms.[9]

It is estimated that by 1850, 42,000 of 82,000 African laborers lived in villages, having acquired, at a cost of over a million dollars (B. G.), twenty-five communal villages and over 7,000 freehold properties and having constructed 10,544 cottages.[10] Considering the conditions of servitude, which were designed to stunt economic, mental, and spiritual advancement, such achievements are unusually noteworthy. Working the land, striking for higher wages, opening retail shops, the African seemed to be leaving his sufferings behind and beginning a new life. Then the tide of immigration began to swell.

### B — Immigration of Indentured Servants

The plantation was not only a unit of production. It became the most important unit of society around 1800.[11] The fact that there were

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4Daly, p. 174.
5Dwarka Nath, **A History of Indians in British Guiana** (London . . . New York, 1950), p. 42f.
6Michael Swan, **British Guiana** (London, 1957), p. 85.
7Daly, p. 174f.
8Ibid., p. 172f.
9Smith, p. 40.
10Daly, p. 180.
11Smith, p. 27.

only 561 qualified voters out of a population of 130,000 in 1847 in British Guiana is sufficient indication of the hold the planters had on the government. As tax money was heavily used to subsidize the importation of indentured servants, this means that the Africans were forced to contribute heavily to the introduction of those who were brought in as cheap labor to compete with them for jobs.[12]

The importation of indentured laborers began as early as 1835 when the first shipload of Portuguese was brought from Madeira. However, from that time until 1841, the only numerically significant importation involved Africans from the West Indies. This included emancipated slaves from the islands as well as slaves captured on the high seas by British ships and "liberated" before being indentured. Indentured laborers were brought from India as early as 1838, and from China beginning in 1853. There were also experiments with other territories: 208 were brought from Malta in 1838. 70 from the U.S.A. in 1839, 164 from the Azores in 1850, 766 from Cape de Verde in 1856 and 53 in 1858. For a time there were also indentured immigrants from Africa.[13]

Before 1846 indentured laborers were not serious competition for the Afro-Guyanese in the labor market. But in that year the following things happened: the British Government dropped its preferential price for West Indian sugar, the planters responded by cutting wages, the laborers struck for six months and then settled for higher wages instead, a famine in Madeira brought the largest number of immigrants from that island in any one year, and the first large quantity of immigrants from India arrived. Thereafter the bargaining position of the former slaves steadily deteriorated.

With the influx of indentured laborers British Guiana came to be a "land of six peoples," a phrase still in common use today. The Chinese, East Indian, Portuguese, African, Other European and Amerindian are considered separate ethnic groups within the land.

Not long after the Portuguese began to arrive, there was friction between them and the Africans. Not only were the Portuguese brought in as competitors for the plantation jobs of the Afro-Guianese but also as they quickly left the fields they were again in direct economic competition with the Africans. They began entering the retail business field which had previously been largely in the hands of the African and colored. The Portuguese were favored by the merchants as agents for the distribution of imported goods and by the bankers as creditors to the satisfaction of the planters who wished the Africans forced back into the fields.

In this highly charged situation the 'Angel Gabriel riots' erupted in 1856. At this time, James Sayers Orr, who had picked up a strong prejudice toward Roman Catholics in his travels, was holding religious

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[12]Daly, p. 162.
[13]Nath, p. 179.

meetings in Georgetown. He was referred to as the 'Angel Gabriel' because of his practice of using a trumpet to announce his meetings. Before long Orr was enjoined from holding further meetings, a showdown came, and riots occurred. To the great satisfaction of the planters, the judiciary sentenced the rioting Negroes to work in the cane fields and to pay damages to the Portuguese. Other riots, growing out of the same friction, occurred in 1888 and 1905.[14]

Not only the Africans, but also the immigrants suffered. Many of the planters seemed to be treating the indentured workers practically the same as they had treated the slaves. Since the local government and judiciary were virtually in the control of the planters, the avenues of recourse were limited. The main actions taken by those who were moved with humanitarian concern were to see that warnings were sounded where the recruiting was done and to pressure the British Government into regulating the more flagrant abuses.

With some exceptions, the workers were bound for a period of five years, during part of which they were to receive wages. After that, they were free to leave or sign up for another term. After a second term they were eligible for free passage home. Most of the immigrants, except those from India, left the plantations as soon as they could. A sizable minority of those from India returned to their native land. From 1843 to 1949, 75,547 returned taking savings amounting to about $60.00 (B. G.) per capita as well as jewelry and gold coins.[15]

Perhaps the most outstanding local champion of the cause of the East Indians was James Crosby, who served as Immigration Agent-General from 1858 until about 1880. Within the limitations of the system, he found a great deal of room to maneuver in curbing the excesses of the planters as he served in a position of undefined responsibilities.

Travel conditions for indentured workers to British Guiana were far from ideal. The journey from Asia was particularly hazardous. The records show that in 1853 the first laborers arrived from China, 647 in number. This number does not include 161 who died in transit and 11 listed as lost overboard.[16] A particularly bad time for those on ships from India was 1864-65. For the six ships arriving in the colony from India in that period the mortality rates ranged from 21.57% to 50.03%.[17]

### C — The Churches and the Immigrants

After emancipation the missionaries of the London Missionary Society continued to play the role of the champion of the African in

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[14]Daly, p. 163 et **passim.**
[15]Nath, p. 186ff. et passim.
[16]Cecil Clementi, **The Chinese in British Guiana** (Georgetown, 1915), p. 31ff.
[17]Nath, p. 181.

the Colony. Although all but one of them had been run out of the Colony in the trouble of 1823, they were soon back again in strength. By 1834 they boasted of having a pastor of pure African descent, the Rev. George McFarlane, who was serving at Lodge. A contemporary chronicler wrote that after the abolition of slavery the state-paid clergy allowed every kind of injustice perpetrated upon the emancipated people of the Colony to go unchallenged.[18]

The London missionaries kept up a continual agitation against the state aided churches and against the policy of indentured immigration. Accused of meddling in politics, they rallied unashamedly to the cause of constitutional reform, promoting the case of the unenfranchised Africans.[19]

However, identifying with the problems of the Africans was accompanied by insensitivity toward the East Indians. A missionary, reporting to the London Missionary Society about 1848, said:

> . . . into this district . . . two-thirds of all the wretched idolaters from Calcutta and Madras have been sent; and the filthy, heathenish habits imported by these Coolies, and exhibited before the eyes of our Creole population, is having an influence, especially upon the young, which will prove beyond all conception injurious.[20]

Concern with the evangelization of the immigrants was left to the state aided churches. The Portuguese were of Roman Catholic heritage and were shepherded into its fold in the Colony. A preponderant number of the Chinese were brought into the Anglican Church. Efforts were made by the state aided churches to evangelize the East Indians, and there was considerable church activity on the plantations with few affiliations.

As early as 1871 the ease with which the Chinese were Christianized in contrast with the East Indians was noted by a member of the Anglican Diocesan Synod.[21] The Chinese became Christians basically by leaving behind their old cultural patterns. A native Chinese pastor was brought to the Colony by the Anglicans in 1856, but he absconded in less than a year apparently responsible for the pregnancy of a colored woman.[22]

### D — The Evangelization of Amerindians

Other than the abortive Moravian mission of the 18th century, there was very little effort to take the Christian faith to the Amerindian until the time of the emancipation of the slaves.

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[18]Wallbridge, p. 223ff.
[19]Daly, p. 283ff.
[20]Wallbridge, p. 10.
[21]Daly, p. 271.
[22]Clementi, p. 295.

The main relationships that the Dutch had with the Amerindians were in bartering for food and dye and for their services in capturing runaway slaves and quelling slave revolts. The Dutch worked through the chiefs, giving them official recognition with marks of office. About 50 years after the Dutch rule had ended a missionary reported seeing an old Waru chief wearing a black coat and carrying a silver-headed staff.[23] These were undoubtedly given by the Dutch as marks of recognition of his position.

The British continued the Dutch policy of bartering with the Amerindians for their services in controlling the slaves. But with the abolition of slavery these services were no longer needed. With government funds to the Amerindians no longer directly available, the state-aided Anglican Church then stepped in and the relations with the Amerindians were based on paternalism and evangelization. Whereas the Amerindians had been second to the Europeans in the social hierarchy of the Colony before the end of slavery, afterwards they were dropped even below the rank of the former slaves and the new indentured immigrants.

The first mission of the Anglican Church to the Amerindians was started in 1829. However, the first real expansion of the work came in the 1840's.

The work was not without its special hazards. The Rev. Thomas Youd, second Anglican missionary to the Amerindians, saw his mission station near the Brazilian border razed by Brazilian soldiers, lost his children to disease and his wife by the poison of an Amerindian sorceress, then was a victim of poisoning himself.[24]

About the time of Youd's death, the man was ordained who is remembered as the most outstanding of all the missionaries to the Amerindians of Guiana. W. H. Brett left England in 1840 at the age of 22 for British Guiana, where he was ordained in 1843. In the beginning he tried to reach them by organizing a school for the children in English. It was some weeks before he got his first pupil. He soon set about to learn the languages and customs of the people, and not only became outstanding as a missionary, but also as a linguist, naturalist, and anthropologist.

During his ministry of about 35 years he translated the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, parts of the Old Testament, the Gospels, Acts, a catechism, and parts of the service into Arawak, and made similar translations into Caribi, Acawaio, and Waru. He also systematized these four languages, phonetically formed their vocabularies, and charted their grammar. The effects of his work were felt far beyond the bounds of his parish. In the first four years of Brett's ministry, 4,970 Amerindians were baptized into the Anglican Church in British Guiana, though only a scattered few had been received before.

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[23]The Rev. Fortunato Pietro Luigi Josa, **The Apostle of the Indians of Guiana** (London, 1887), p. 51.

[24]**Ibid.**, p. 137.
Daly, p. 107.

Brett made plans for missions to reach all the tribes of British Guiana, specifically mentioning seven in addition to the four tribes in contact with his mission. In this connection he travelled widely in the Colony. On one such trip he penetrated the upper reaches of the Berbice River at an Indian settlement after having sighted no humans for the previous 42 hours.[25]

In his parish in the Pomeroon district of the Essequibo coast, Brett trained indigenous workers to assist him. When the Chinese and East Indian came in number into his parish, he felt it to be too much to attempt to master their languages; but he did make provision for trained Christian workers from among them.

Brett's work, in its scope and vision, provides a rather unusual contrast with the manner in which he was able to state one aspect of mission philosophy. His work was at an advanced level for the times, and there is considerable doubt whether it has been matched since. But he was very much a child of the times in the way he viewed his native Britain in relation to his work. He thought it to be

> . . . delightful to consider our country in that most honourable position, in which the favour of God alone has placed her among the various tribes of the earth; as invested with power and opportunity to be His instrument in bestowing the word of life, and planting His church in those heathen lands, which He has placed beneath her rule:— that the knowledge of salvation in Christ may not be forgotten . . . [26]

He mused over the problem of how the cultural patterns of the Amerindians were upset by the presence of white settlers, with the population of the aborigines often dwindling away as a result. Concerning the position that the Amerindians should be left in their natural condition, he says:

> In one point all seem to agree, that by contact with civilization, without the healing power of Christianity, they become much worse than they were before in their naturally wild condition.[27]

Brett was certain that the missionary presence was a good thing and well accepted if the missionary imparted the heart of the Gospel message:

> . . . nothing but the love of God, as manifested in his Son, dying for their sins, seemed to create more than a temporary interest in any of them, I believed this to be invariably the case . . . unless

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[25]The Rev. W. H. Brett, **The Indian Tribes of Guiana; Their Condition and Habits.** (London, 1868), p. 292ff.
[26]The Rev. W. H. Brett, **Indian Missions in Guiana** (London, 1851), p. 26f
[27]**Ibid.**, p. 229ff.

this be the groundwork of a missionary's teaching, his labour is but nought.[28]

The only other significant efforts in this period to evangelize the Amerindians were made by the Roman Catholics, who shared with the Anglicans in receiving government subsidy for this purpose.

### E — Lutheran Church Without Lutheran Pastor

In these crucial times of change in the Colony, the Lutheran congregation had great difficulty adjusting to the new conditions. With the departure of the last Dutch pastor, the Rev. H. W. P. Junius, in 1841, the congregation was forced into a new situation in seeking a replacement. Previously all pastors had been sent by the Lutheran Church of Amsterdam. But in 1841, having been notified that the Lutheran Consistory in Amsterdam would no longer be in correspondence with colonial churches,[29] the congregation turned elsewhere to seek a pastor. From the turn of events it seems that the cessation of correspondence had to do only with the previous system of providing pastors, because the congregation soon secured the services of pastor of another denomination, whom they sent to Amsterdam to study Dutch under the auspices of the Lutheran Consistory there.

One such offer was made to the Rev. J. H. Bernau, of the Church Missionary Society, who was at the Anglican Mission at Bartica Grove on the Essequibo River. Pastor Bernau wrote to the Lutheran Vestry on June 30, 1841 declining the offer. He said that he did not feel that the Lord had called him to minister to their congregation and prayed that God might bless the congregation with a pastor.[30]

An approach to a pastor, the Rev. Alexander Riach, who was serving in Berbice, was accepted.

> In 1842 Mr. Riach, a Presbyterian clergyman, left his own church and became pastor to the Lutheran congregation and was sent to Holland at their expense to study the Dutch language. [31]

This pastorate seems to have been rather brief and of questionable benefit to the Lutheran community. March 14, 1842 is the date that Pastor Riach signed the records as pastor of the Lutheran Church in Berbice. However, it was not until September of 1843 that his trip to Holland was authorized.[32] Furthermore, the existing record of his

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28Ibid., p. 111.
29Note : 1841. Archives : Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.
30Letter: J. H. Bernau to Lutheran Vestry, Berbice, 30th June 1841. Archives: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.
31Letter : Henry K. Davson, member of the Lutheran Commission appointed by the Court of Policy of British Guiana, to Honourable W. F. Haynes Smith, 13 December 1875. Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.
32Document: "Acte van Bevestiging . . ." 15 September 1843. Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana.

baptisms in the Lutheran congregation, which seems to be complete, shows baptisms only from March 1, 1844 to August 22, 1845. The ministry of Riach was marked not only by limited pastoral acts but also by financial entanglement. "Mr. Riach retired from the Lutheran charge in 1846 after himself having got in debt to the Society by the lease of Pln. Augsburg." [33]

In 1840 the books of the Lutheran Church had shown a credit of $208,268.22 (B.G.). After that, the funds began to disappear very fast. Sizable loans were made to members of the Lutheran Vestry and others. This was not the first time for such practices, but apparently it was the worst. Mr. Hart, a member of the Lutheran Church, petitioned for the interference of the Government on the ground that the funds were being misapplied and asked that Mr. Riach's appointment be cancelled. The reply received was: "The Governor declines to interfere with the appointment of a minister."[34]

At a meeting of the Vestry in February Pastor Riach offered to resign as pastor of the congregation on the condition that his obligations in connection with Plantation Augsburg be dropped. He also asked reimbursement for improvements on the plantation. He further suggested that the parsonage be rented for a time, since the funds which were recently so munificent had become so depleted that the interest did not pay the minister's salary. His motion was defeated. Mr. R. Hart moved that Riach's lease of Augsburg and contract as minister remain in force, and that the funds of the congregation be used as intended, for religious purposes. This motion was carried.[35] However, Riach's departure from the pastorate was not measurably delayed, and he returned to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

After several years of complaining about the administration of the Lutheran affairs, Mr. Hart succeeded in becoming Scriba of the Lutheran Church and Administrator of its funds. It was probably late in 1847 when Hart was elected to these two positions, in actual power the two highest in the administration of the business of the congregation. Then shortly after, apparently in January of 1848, a mysterious fire destroyed Hart's house and a great part of the papers and documents of the Lutheran Church including the financial records of the years 1841-47.[36]

The books as reopened in February of 1848 showed a credit balance of $67,280.00 (B.G.) including property and outstanding loans. This means that, including estimated revenues for the period, there was a disappearance of about $170,000.00 in about seven years. Also beyond recovery were virtually all of the records of where the money went.

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[33]Letter : Davson to Smith.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Minutes : Vestry, Lutheran Church in Berbice, 2 February 1846. Archives : Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

[36]Extract : Minutes No. 1. Vestry, Lutheran Church in Berbice, 9 February, 1848. Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

The next year steps were taken for a working arrangement with the Methodists for partial spiritual care for the congregation. In April of 1849 it was decided that because of the necessity of

> . . . having public worship performed in our church regularly to prevent the members of our community straying here and there and as our funds do not permit the engagement of a properly qualified Lutheran minister; we must endeavour to obtain some other minister whose religion shall come the nearest to ours; and to arrange with such minister for the administering of the Holy Sacrament to the members who may be thereunto disposed.[37]

The next month, the Vestry decided to enter into an agreement with the Wesleyans, who had held services in the Lutheran Church from time to time. The church building and parsonage were to be made available to visiting ministers on certain conditions including: 1) ". . . in case a Lutheran Minister is secured we reserve the right to take back the church and parsonage on reasonable notice . . ." and 2) no Wesleyan services are to be held in the church except those personally conducted by an ordained minister.[38]

Whatever had been lost, the congregation had not completely lost benevolent concern. In 1854 $100 (B.G.) was sent for the destitute in Barbados, where there had been 15,000 deaths in a cholera epidemic.[39]

And with its finances improving, under the initiative of Hart the congregation decided in 1861 to seek a Lutheran pastor. In these years, English was increasingly used in the congregation, with some of the vestry minutes being written in English. So in September of 1861 Hart reported that he had visited London, Holland, and Berlin, finding several Lutheran ministers inclined to go to the West Indies, but none well enough acquainted with the English language. Hart reported that in London Pastor Schlop

> . . . assured me that there were no English Lutherans and that although he was stationed in London he performed the services in the German language.[40]

### F — Saved by the Court

In 1874 Mr. R. Hart died and was replaced as Scriba and Administrator of the Lutheran funds by Mr. George Frederick Schwartz. Hart had borrowed from the Lutheran funds for his benefit $18,830 (B.G.) and had signed over as security two policies of assurance on his life.

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[37]Extract: Minutes No. 24. Vestry, Lutheran Church in Berbice, 21 April 1849, Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

[38]Ibid., 23 May 1849.

[39]Ibid., No. 112, 6 July 1854.

[40]Ibid., No. 192, 3 September 1861. (In connection with the intermarriage of the British royal family and German royalty, Lutheran pastors served in London in the times almost exclusively as court chaplains with an entirely German language ministry.)

The premiums on those policies were paid from time to time from the Lutheran funds. In December of 1874 those policies provided $14,400 (£3,000) for the Lutheran funds. At that time $4,800 was set aside for distribution among the members of the Lutheran community, now numbering only six men and eight women, one part to be given to each man and one half part to each woman.[41]

The rapid depletion of Lutheran funds had once again been resumed. The Lutheran Church in British Guiana appeared doomed to extinction. Perhaps the only question to a disinterested observer would have been whether all the funds would be squandered before the last Lutheran died. This very question was raised by members of the congregation, who asked to be left unmolested "until such time that the funds are exhausted or the members die out."[42]

The Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church had been the only church groups in the land in Dutch days. The Reformed Church had already given up the ghost. In April of 1871, Mr. Obermuller, apparently the last surviving member of the Consistory of the last Dutch Reformed congregation in the Colony handed over to the pastor of St. Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church in Georgetown nine sacramental vessels: one engraved 'De Kerck in Rio Essequibo Ao 1772,' and another engraved 'De Hervormde Kerk in Rio Demarary 1792.'[43]

Also a Lutheran congregation in Demerara and Essequibo had faded into oblivion. Four of its sacramental vessels are extant: one engraved, from C. G. Fikker "Demerara Den. 18 Januari 1821 . . . Fur Die Lutherische Gemeine . . ." and another engraved, ". . . Carl Godfried Fikker aan de Lutherische Gemeente van Demerarij en Essequebo den 16 den Januari 1822."[44] We do not know when this congregation was organized, when its life ended, or whether it ever had a pastor of its own. Pastor Junius writes of preaching in Demerary and Essequibo in 1835.[45] A Dutch map from the last decade of the 18th century at the Ministry of Lands and Mines, Georgetown, has a place marked "Luth. Gemeente" at the Southwestern end of the Essequibo island of Leguan. The same map also has a plantation marked "De Witt Zwaan," or The White Swan. That plantation, now joined to Plantation Success, still carries the name De Witt Zwaan. Probably the Dutch Lutherans in Essequibo and Demerara never had a resident pastor or a church building.

But the Lutheran Church in Berbice, the last church in the Colony surviving from Dutch days, was destined to live. In that distribution

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41Lutheran Commission, "Minutes of Evidence Taken in Berbice," 18 October 1875. Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

42"The humble declaration of the undersigned Lutheran Members of the Lutheran Community of Berbice," 16 October 1875, to the Lutheran Commission. Quoted in Kunkle, p. 56f.

43Cruickshank, p. 12.

44Sacramental vessels. Archives: Lutheran Church in Guyana.

45Letter : H. W. P. Junius to Lutheran Vestry, Berbice, Bylagen 144; 1835. Archives : Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

of $4,800 in 1874, there were irregularities that led to dissensions which started a chain of events resulting in a complete turning of the tide.

Some of the women complained that they did not get their fair share of the distribution. One grumbled that she only received $20. Complaints were sent to the Court of Policy, the highest judicial body in the Colony, and a Lutheran Commission was appointed to investigate the administration of the funds.

After the matter came into public view, a reader of the local paper inquired:

> Who are 'Lutherans'? There are not a dozen in the County, even including men, women and children, and of the latter there are none, for the simple reason that there can be no Lutherans now-a-days. And why so? Why, because there is no Lutheran minister in the Colony to make any. Therefore, the natural consequence is that in a few more years we shall have no more Lutherans.[46]

The writer further suggests that another pastor should make some Lutherans; maybe the Scots pastor could baptize and confirm some, since it was done before.[47]

As the Lutheran Commission met, it heard testimony including the following from George F. Schwartz, Scriba:

> I on behalf of myself and the other members of the Lutheran Community claim a right to dispose of the interest and the capital of the property belonging to the Lutherans . . . The community lately divided Four Thousand Eight Hundred dollars amongst themselves. We might have divided the whole property amongst ourselves but we have solemnly resolved on the 1st of this year not to do so . . . I claim the right on behalf of myself and the other members of the Community to deal with the Fund as we choose and for any purpose we consider proper . . .[48]

Concerning the question of only $20 to one woman, he said:

> I thought it was not advisable to give her the money at once and at great trouble to myself I undertook to pay her money in small instalments.[49]

The Court of Policy did not accept the position that the Lutheran funds could be used for any purpose the Community so desired. The Court rejected also the view that since the Lutherans had always

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[46]The Berbice Gazette, September 21, 1875; Letter to the editor from 'Cosmopolite.'
[47]Ibid.
[48]Lutheran Commission, "Minutes of Evidence Taken in Berbice," . . .
[49]Ibid.

taken care of their needy, with none ever becoming a public charge, then the fund was being used according to its original purpose. The Court ruled that another essential purpose of the fund, as established by the Dutch, was to provide for a minister. The Court decided that the fund had been improperly administered. Trustees were appointed to oversee the Berbice Lutheran Fund. Steps to call a minister were required.

Mr. Schwartz suggested that the fund, $84,756.87 (B.G.) in 1874,[50] was not large enough to assure a salary for a permanent pastor. He proposed withdrawing an amount from the fund to build cottages for rental on certain of the Lutheran properties, then when the fund was sufficient, take steps to call a pastor. This proposal was rejected with the stipulation that immediate steps should be taken to call a pastor.

The Berbice Lutheran Fund was quite a bone of contention for some time to come. It was not until 1948 that the Berbice Lutheran Fund Ordinance was repealed and the full administrative responsibility of the fund turned over to the church.

So it was that the government, which several times earlier had refused to intervene in the question of the appointment of Lutheran ministers, at this time required the church to appoint a minister. And the church, which had seemed doomed to perish, survived.

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[50]Letter : Davson to Smith.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE MITTELHOLZER PERIOD
# 1876 — 1913

## SYMBOLS

C. W. Hamilton

The moon's loaned gold's inwrought with sapphire light
And woven with the fleece of seraph's skirts;
The crystal necklace of the vigil night
Hewn bright upon an angel anvil flirts
With cloth of blue. The blood of Christ is shown
In bars of sterile flame where sank awhile
To rest the gory day-star, which has known
Earth's centuries of weeping woe and shame
For Crucifixion's deed. But yonder floats
A wisp of sacerdotal white flecked with
Strong threads of frowning green —
This green's God's ire
At the black curse of homicidal sin,
The white's the chastening purge of Pentecostal fire!

As the Lutheran Church in Berbice began to emerge from its darkest night, the symbols of the faith once more came vividly into view. From near extinction the church was brought back to life under its first Guianese pastor, the Rev. J. R. Mittelholzer.

Problems of revitalizing a dormant congregation were not the only difficulties which confronted Pastor Mittelholzer. Financial and legal problems were centered in a challenge of his position as a Lutheran pastor. The handling of these problems included steps leading to an affiliation with the East Pennsylvania Synod in North America.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century the East Indians were well on the way to becoming the most populous ethnic group in the Colony, and the one most resistant to Christianity. The Lutheran church in the Colony made no prominent efforts to reach out to the East Indians during this period, even though considerable efforts were being made by other denominations.

Different frontiers were crossed by the Lutheran Church in this period. Pastor Mittelholzer established congregations up the Berbice River, and for the first time the Lutheran Church in Berbice was more than one congregation. Included in this work on the river was the church's first outreach to the Amerindians.

## A — Lutheran Church Secures a Guianese Pastor

In 1876 when the Lutheran Church in Berbice was required by the Court of Policy to reinstitute a regular ministry, one of the first steps taken was to contact Pastor Johan H. H. Sander of the Lutheran Church in Paramaribo, Surinam. There had been previous contact with Pastor Sander. In 1852 there was a letter from him concurring with the plans which the Lutherans in Berbice had made with the Wesleyans.[1]

Pastor Sander, with the consent of his vestry, agreed to serve as acting pastor of the congregation in Berbice. From April, 1876, to January, 1878, he received five males and four females into confirmed membership in the congregation.[2] By August of 1876 the relationship with the Wesleyans had been terminated, and arrangements had been made for ministers of the London Missionary Society to conduct Sunday services.[3] One of these ministers was the Rev. J. R. Mittelholzer, who was soon to become the pastor of the Lutheran Congregation.

For three years, Pastor Sander acted as pastor of the Lutheran Church in Berbice, making infrequent visits from Paramaribo. On his first trip, he never even reached Berbice.

> The Scriba reports that he had gone to Demerara on the 19 ulto. to receive the Lutheran minister of Surinam, the Reverend J. Sander, who on his arrival here was to have preached in our church, administered the Sacrament to the members, but that owing to the misdirection of this gentleman's friends he landed at Nickerie to cross over here as the shortest route; that getting sick there and no safe conveyance to cross the river after remaining some days in Nickerie he was at last lucky enough to get to Demerara barely in time to catch the French steamer for Paramaribo, it appearing that his leave of absence from his congregation was only to that date. All the members had previously been warned to attend church on the arrival of the minister and there were nearly all the members in attendance besides others who in former times always attended the Lutheran preaching in our church.[4]

The Scriba also reports reception of sermons, which seem to have been sent by Pastor Sander for reading by the Vestry: "The Scriba notifies the arrival of the sermons and thinks it better to wait for the opening sermon by the Revd. Mr. Sanders at his next trip previous to commencing the readings."[5]

At the time that arrangements were made with the Vestry in Paramaribo for the services of Pastor Sander, there was also another request. The vestry in Paramaribo was asked:

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1Vestry Minutes No. 40, . . . 24 March 1852.
2Vestry Minutes . . . pencilled postcript to minutes of 1875
3Vestry Minutes . . . 10 August 1876.
4Ibid., 1876, quoted in Kunkle, p. 61ff.
5Ibid.

> . . . as a brotherly, friendly act to make enquiries in Holland about such a minister for us — care being taken to guard against the Lutherans of Surinam at any time making pretensions of supremacy, connection or otherwise by and on account of this help but this merely considered because they having correspondents in Holland and we living in an English colony it is easier for them to obtain information on the matter than we can . . .[6]

Apparently nothing ever came of this last attempt to secure a minister from Holland. As the arrangement with Pastor Sander was only a temporary expedient, the Vestry, in consultation with Pastor Sander, made plans for a regular ministry:

> Agreement between Administrators George Frederick Schwartz and Jacob Hicken in their capacity as administrators of Lutheran Property and The Rev. John Robert Mittelholzer, minister of the Gospel, officiating minister of the Church at Lonsdale in connection with the London Missionary Society in the parish of St. Clements in the aforesaid County of Berbice . . .[7]

Then follow the terms of agreement, acceded to on August 1, 1878. Pastor Mittelholzer was to go to Surinam before August 22, on a leave of absence of one month, to be examined and confirmed a member of the Lutheran Church by the Vestry and Minister of the Lutheran Church in Surinam. He moved into the parsonage August 15, left for Surinam via Demerara, and returned on September 5. Pastor Mittelholzer first preached as pastor of the Lutheran Church in Berbice on September 15, 1878, preaching in the morning on Psalm 79:9 and in the evening on Jeremiah 3:22-25. Holy Communion was celebrated in November, 1878, and afterward on the first Sunday of each quarter.[8]

According to Pastor Mittelholzer, the administrators gave as their reasons for calling on him:

> . . . first, that they were satisfied with my temporary ministrations; and secondly, that from my being directly descended from the old German colonists, a good connection between the past and present would be realized in my person.[9]

Mittelholzer has recorded the following autobiographical sketch:

> I am a native of British Guiana, born in June, 1840. My father, Jan Vincent Mittelholzer, was born in the colony, but of German parentage. His father, C. M. Mittelholzer, came to this colony at an early time from Switzerland. Both my father and grandfather were planters. Nor am I aware of any of my elder

6Ibid.
7Vestry Minutes . . . July 20, 1878.
8Ibid., attached information.
9Mittelholzer, p. 320.

male relatives ever having entered the Christian ministry.

My own choice of a profession, at first, was that of engineering, which I pursued with great zeal for a time. I was then a boy of 14 years. My course, however, was providentially diverted. An English missionary, the Rev. H. B. Ingram, having seen a small engine of wood constructed by me, took me under his personal care and tuition, with the view of educating me in the higher mathematics, so as to fit me more thoroughly for a professional engineer. After conducting some examinations in the mathematics, the good English minister was taken away from the colony. But I was provided for. Another minister, the late Rev. John Dagliesh (a Scotchman) took me, but he thought it best for me to study literature, as well as the sciences and teach in the schools. I now became a teacher of the young, and taught for many years, having successfully passed examinations under the Government Inspector of Schools. It was whilst so engaged, in connection with the London Missionary Society, that, favourable reports reaching the Directors of said Society, I was by them directed to study classics, theology, etc., etc., in preparation for the work of the Christian ministry. Thus it will be seen that at the first my education was directed for specific objects, and by an all-wise Providence then became blended into the work of the Christian ministry, thus qualifying me to work in a country like this, where a minister must be "made all things to all men," that he may "by all means save some."

Another incident which I consider most providential in my life is that my father and his brother were both of them "postholders" (high military officers) under the Dutch colonial government, having command of the Indian militia, etc. Thus becoming at an early age acquainted with the ways of the Indians, and aided by the influence which my father and uncle wielded over them, I have been enabled after the lapse of so many years to do successful missionary work among these people. Truly

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

I have worked hard and am still working hard every day, to recover for our Church the ground which had been lost. May the Lord spare me to see Lutheranism take a firm hold of the country, all the obloquy which our adversaries had heaped upon us completely wiped off, and the glory of the Lord fully restored in his Zion here and in the colony of British Guiana.[10]

Pastor Mittelholzer does not mention previous family connection with the Lutheran Church. However, the baptismal records of the congregation show a child, Johan Lodewyk, born in February and bap-

[10]Ibid., p. 300f.

tized in April of 1830, whose father was Jan Vincent Mittelholzer,[11] also the father of John Robert. Another child of Jan Vincent Mittelholzer, Appolina Louisa, was baptized in the Lutheran Church in 1840.[12]

John Robert Mittelholzer spent his early years with parents and relatives at Plantation Schepmoed, which is on the East Bank of the Berbice River, twenty-five miles from New Amsterdam. His mother was a native Dutch creole. Some years later the family moved to New Amsterdam, where John Robert worked at the Berbice Foundry, and later as a schoolmaster. About 1866 he married Mary June Kyte; they had eight children.[13] He was ordained by the London Missionary Society in 1872.[14] Lonsdale, his place of residence at the time he became related to the Lutheran Church, is six miles up the East Bank of the Berbice River from New Amsterdam.

**B — The Parish Is Revived**

When the Rev. J. R. Mittelholzer became pastor of the Lutheran Church in Berbice in August of 1878 there were only eleven members. There had been nine received during the time that Pastor Sander served as acting pastor, but, primarily because of deaths, there was a net loss of one during the three years of his service.[15]

Then under Pastor Mittelholzer the work began to expand numerically and geographically. From 1878 to 1890 the communicant membership increased from 11 to 195. In addition to the church in New Amsterdam, five stations were added on the Berbice River. Pastor Mittelholzer wrote:

> Having organized the city church into working order, I next turned my attention to the spiritual conditions of the aboriginal Indians in the distant forest lands of our country. With the cooperation and encouragement of our vestry I proceeded to invade the heathen haunts of the 'red men of the forest' and plant in their largest settlements the banner of the Gospel of Christ . . . Point after point was gained by the Gospel until five stations were established. There are but two tribes of the Aborigines in Berbice County, viz., the Arawaks and the Accawois. The Word of the Lord was kindly received by these people and many of them are now confirmed members.[16]

One of the stations established by Pastor Mittelholzer, Mt. Carmel at Ituni, is still today the largest of the congregations of the Lutheran Church in Guyana that are predominantly Amerindian. Pastor Mittel-

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[11]Baptismal record book of the Lutheran Church in Berbice . . .
[12]Ibid.,
[13]E. A. Mittelholzer, biographical data of J. R. Mittelholzer, typewritten; September 22, 1950.
[14]Minutes : Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, any year : 1890-1913.
[15]Mittelholzer, p. 318f.
[16]Kunkle, p. 82.

holzer also started work fifteen and twenty miles beyond Ituni at Purwaka and Arawaima, where Amerindians gathered. The farthest point his work is known to have reached is Mappa Lake, fifty miles beyond Ituni and 175 river miles into the interior.[17]

Two of the points on the Berbice River which Pastor Mittelholzer added to the parish were Negro villages: St. Lust and Maria Henrietta. At the time of its entry into the parish, Bethel at Maria Henrietta was the second largest congregation in the church, and continued to be so until the 1940's. Bethel had been a congregation of the London Missionary Society as early as 1840. After coming into the Lutheran parish sometime before 1890, the congregation retained the name Bethel until about the turn of the century the name was changed to St. Paul.

> But St. Lust — how did such a name ever come to be? . . . The plantation originally there bore the name "Stephanus Lust." *Lust* means enjoyment or delight, and is frequently found in the nomenclature of Dutch plantations . . . Later it came to be owned by a planter of French blood, Jean Saint, and the name was then changed to "Saint Lust," or simply the delight of M. Jean Saint. But all that has long been forgotten, and now it is simply written *St. Lust,* giving the erroneous idea that it was named after some minor saint in the hagiography.[18]

Pastor Mittelholzer was a hard worker and a man of many talents. He made at least four trips a year up the Berbice River.

> Pastor Mittelholzer was a tall, well-built man; and judging from the work he accomplished, of a rugged physique. His interests were wide. In addition to his pastoral and missionary efforts, he had a facility for languages, played the flute and violin, and did oil and water color painting. In a time and place when elementary education was at a minimum and secondary education a rarity, he established a secondary school in the parsonage, and was himself the chief teacher, assisted by his wife. This he named the Geneva Academy.[19]

### C — East Pennsylvania Synod Affiliation

While parish life was being so dramatically revived, problems were arising in the administrative affairs of the Lutheran parish. At the last Vestry meeting of 1878, G. F. Schwartz and Jacob Hicken were given life time appointments as Administrators.[20] At a Vestry meeting in 1880, the question was raised whether Mittelholzer was a Lutheran minister. There was harassment of Pastor Mittelholzer in

[17] Ibid., p. 82f.
[18] Ibid., p. 70.
[19] Ibid., p. 73f.
[20] Sketch prepared for defence of Mittelholzer in court trial of 1888. Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

The Rev. John Robert **Mittelholzer**
1840 — 1913

that his salary was often not paid in full. Then in 1888 the following things happened: 1) A lawsuit was introduced challenging whether Mittelholzer was a Lutheran minister and asking for his dismissal. 2) A petition, signed by 56 members of the Lutheran congregation was sent to the Governor requesting action releasing the Berbice Lutheran Fund to the custody of the congregation, noting that the pastor's salary had not been paid for 12 months. 3) The Administrators of the Lutheran Funds were replaced by new ones elected by the congregation.[21]

This state of confusion lasted until January 24, 1890, when the court ruled in favor of the defence in the lawsuit against Mittelholzer.

Concerning these problems Mittelholzer remarks that the lawyer for the prosecution

> . . . managed to cause delay, and kept matters pending for three long years, trusting that being kept so long out of my salary (for the bank was advised to pay the moneys to neither party till the matter was settled by the judges) I would in disgust vacate the pulpit. We were thus besieged. But the Lutheran church was still vocal, and all her services were regularly conducted, to the utmost surprise of all lookers-on. The Lord helped us. How I managed to sustain a large family without a penny of my salary, and, thank God, cheerfully discharge my solemn duties, the Lord only knows. It is now to myself mysterious![22]

Testimony against Mittelholzer in the trial gave assurance that an English-speaking Lutheran pastor for the congregation could be secured from the German element of the population of the United States. However, it was Mittelholzer and his supporters who were to make contact with the Lutherans in the United States. It would be interesting to know what led Pastor Mittelholzer and the Lutherans of Berbice to choose the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania. In retrospect it seems that it would have been difficult to find another synod more congenial to their approach. This synod: 1) already had a policy of receiving isolated congregations outside its territory 2) was among those Lutheran synods making extensive use of the English-language 3) held a doctrinal position considerably more flexible than some in determining who is a Lutheran.[23] The congregation in Berbice, at that time, was an isolated English-speaking Lutheran congregation with a pastor who had been ordained by the London Missionary Society.

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[21]Mittelholzer, p. 320f.
Petition : July 11, 1888, Lutheran members to Governor. Archives : Lutheran Church in Guyana.

[22]Mittelholzer, p. 321.

[23]During the last half of the nineteenth century there were heavy waves of immigration into the United States from German and Scandinavian Lutheran areas of Europe. Ethnic, linguistic, and doctrinal divisions left the Lutheran Church in the United States quite fragmented. Many synods emphasized linguistic distinctness. Many drew elaborate and sharp distinctions concerning the doctrines and practices which they considered basic in determining who is a Lutheran.

So in 1889 the Synod heard of a communication from Pastor Mittelholzer and the Vestry of the Lutheran Church in Berbice asking for, "Synodical recognition and for the re-ordination of their pastor, if deemed necessary."[24]

Mittelholzer describes the timing thus:

> Just four months before the judges brought the case to hearing and decision, the vestry had put itself in communication with the President of the East Pennsylvania Synod for recognition. And just a week after the three judges delivered their able and learned "Decision on the Lutheran Matter" — a decision worthy of record in the Church's archives — a letter came from the United States . . . which led to the consummating event of official connection with the Synod.
>
> This act was the coup de grace to the church's triumph. This connection, which was effected September 18, 1890, will be ever memorable in this church's history.[25]

Pastor Mittelholzer arrived in Philadelphia July 29, 1890, and got in touch with the Synod President. At the meeting the congregation was received on the basis of a full statement on the part of the vestry of the history, condition and affairs of the congregation, a formal application for admission with a certified declaration of acceptance of the constitution, a copy of which was sent to them, and a full statement by the pastor of the condition and work of the congregation.

Pastor Mittelholzer was received into the Ministerium on the basis of a report referring to:

> . . . ordination papers from the London Missionary Society and an honorable dismission from the officers of that body, also a certificate of confirmation into the Evangelical Lutheran Church at Surinam, Dutch Guiana, together with testimonials of high character and standing from prominent clergymen and laymen of New Amsterdam. Your Committee are satisfied with the validity of the ordination, and after a lengthy and most interesting conference with Brother Mittelholzer, are prepared to recommend that he be admitted . . .[26]

The synod thereafter listed the date of Mittelholzer's ordination as 1872, the year that he was ordained by the London Missionary Society. Not only Pastor Mittelholzer but also the congregation in New Amsterdam, with its stations up the Berbice River, became affiliated with the East Pennsylvania Synod, a synod of the General Synod.

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[24]Minutes, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, 1889. President's Report, p. 9.
Report of Special Committee No. 15, p. 33f.
[25]Mittelholzer, p. 321f.
[26]Minutes, Evangelical Lutheran of East Pennsylvania, 1890, p. 51.

Pastor Mittelholzer never returned to the United States, but apportionment payments of over $300.00 (U.S.) were sent in over the next twenty-one years. The parish in Berbice, apportioned on the same basis as the other congregations of the synod, overpaid its apportionment in two of these years.

There seems to be no record that subsidy was ever given, requested, or offered from the East Pennsylvania Synod to the parish in Berbice. The work in Berbice was consistently treated as a constituent part of the synod. However, in 1894, a request came from Pastor Mittelholzer asking that the General Synod establish a congregation in Georgetown. He noted that Georgetown had a population of 55-60,000, with sufficient room for an efficient Lutheran Church, and that a Lutheran congregation in Georgetown would cause Lutheran work in the colony to be very much accelerated and strengthened. This request was not considered Synod business by the East Pennsylvania Synod and was referred to the Foreign Mission Board of the General Synod.[27] Nothing came of the overture.

Pastor Mittelholzer returned in 1890 with

> . . . a fine set of sacramental vessels of Gorham silver — two lovely chalices, a flagon, a paten, and a baptismal bowl. All are still in use steadily in Ebenezer Church.[28]

**D — Some Social and Economic Problems**

Stability of family life did not come easily in British Guiana. One of the main factors contributing to the problem was the paucity of women. From the beginning of colonization there had been a shortage of women in the land. Among the slaves there was always a preponderance of able bodied males because of the preferences of the slave purchasers. And there was always a shortage of European women.

> . . . inter-breeding between the colonists and slave girls was practised from the beginning of colonization. As late as 1806, when Staunton St. Clair, a British army officer, arrived in the Colony, there were few European women there. "The first thing generally done by a European on his arrival in this country," he wrote, "is to provide himself with a mistress from among the blacks, mulattoes, or mestees . . . The price varies from £100 to £150. Many of these girls read and write . . . They perform all the duties of a wife except presiding at table . . ."[29]

In the first group of indentured laborers from India there were 3 women for each 100 men. There were no Chinese women in the Colony until seven years after the first group of men arrived. Within each

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[27]Ibid., 1894, p. 31.
[28]Kunkle, p. 69.
[29]Swan, p. 49.

ethnic group, as well as in the population as a whole, there remained a paucity of women as long as there was a high percentage of foreign born.[30]

The percentage of foreign born in the colony was 39% in 1881, 26% in 1911, 18% in 1921, 12% in 1931. In addition to instability of family life, this disproportion of the sexes contributed to the high suicide rate and led to woundings and murders.[31]

The problem of the assimilation of the various ethnic groups began to take, toward the end of the 19th century, some forms which still remain.

The number of Chinese in the colony was 1,273 in 1859, 10,023 in 1866, and 3,651 in 1891.[32] These figures succinctly illustrate the fact that the use of Chinese as indentured laborers was a brief experiment which came to be considered unsatisfactory by the planters as well as by the Chinese. The Chinese who remained in the Colony soon left the plantations and gravitated to the populated areas where they occupied themselves with such things as grocery and restaurant work

The Portuguese came in larger numbers over a longer period of time, but they also gravitated away from agricultural labor. In 1891 their population in the Colony was about at its peak, on the average diminishing almost 1,000 each decade for the next forty years.[33] By 1851 the Portuguese had the majority of licenses to operate shops in Georgetown, in New Amsterdam, and in the rural areas, which categories were inclusive. Both Chinese and Portuguese by the end of the century had exhibited a high degree of upward mobility into the professions, commerce, and government service.[34]

In 1829 there were 230 plantations in the Colony, owned by almost as many owners. By 1891 the number had been reduced to 101. By 1911 they had been reduced and combined into 44 estates, most of them owned by two companies. By 1958, 15 of the 19 estates were a part of Bookers' Sugar Estates Ltd. This development from multiple individual plantations into large centrally controlled estates was well under way by the end of the 19th century.

The Afro-Guyanese, the majority group in the population, did not succeed in escaping from the plantations, or estates. Many did escape, though. A few joined the Amerindians in providing the labor for the forestry industries. Some sought gold and diamonds in the interior.

> Between 1880 and 1886 activity in the goldfields had developed to such an extent that the government introduced Mining Regulations to protect claims and to provide for the payment of royalties. The work in the goldfields was carried out by Negroes but their

[30]Nath, p. 208, 210.
[31]Ibid., p. 211, 124f.
[32]Clementi, p. 318.
[33]Newman, p. 43.
[34]Smith, p. 44f.

> expeditions to the interior were financed by the merchant and sometimes professional classes. Portuguese and a few Chinese as well as Coloured led in the development of these 'minor' industries . . . in the mid-1880's it looked very much as if the future of the country lay in the interior and not with the declining fortunes of the sugar plantations on the coast.[35]

The Afro-Guyanese also entered business, the professions, teaching and civil service, and in the 1890's Andrew Benjamin Brown became the first Negro to serve in the legislature. But most of the Afro-Guyanese either drifted into the towns or remained with the estates, mainly to work with the factories and field machinery.

However, by 1891 East Indians were predominant in the estate labor force. In that year East Indians were 79% of the population living on the estates and 75.9% of the agricultural labor force, virtually all of whom were in the employ of the plantations or estates. East Indians were also at this time well on the way to becoming the most numerous ethnic group in the land. (See Appendix VII)

The desires of the East Indians for some measure of independence from the sugar estates was met in a way which was guided by the self-interest of the government and the planters. Beginning in 1880 land settlements were established from time to time for those East Indians who were willing, and who were approved, to accept land in lieu of return passage to India. Lots for cultivation as well as for residence were provided. The planters had tried various other means to prevent East Indians from taking advantage of the provision of their indentured contracts for return passage to India. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when sugar prices were depressed, this seemed the best means of maintaining an adequate labor force at the least expense. The government even experimented with selling land to the East Indians, in hopes that they would voluntarily forfeit the right to return passage, thereby preserving government revenues.[36]

East Indians achieved a measure of economic independence through the cultivation of these lands which was undoubtedly beyond planter expectations. During the first decade of the 20th century the production of rice reached such a level that exports of rice were begun and imports virtually disappeared. In 1884-88 there were about 2,500 acres under rice cultivation; in 1908, there were 29,746.

The "problem" of integrating East Indians into the developing Guianese society had not yet taken on much importance in the 19th century. For the most part they were segregated on the plantations.

**E — Education and Evangelism Among the East Indians**

As the East Indian population grew, the Established Churches endeavored to have a church and a school on or near each estate for

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[35]Smith, p. 51.
[36]Daly, p. 184ff.
Nath, p. 94ff. 229.

the education and evangelization of the East Indians. These efforts met resistance from the East Indians and from the planters.

> Christian missionaries made a determined attempt to christianize East Indians, but the managers gave them no encouragement. Instead, in order to keep the immigrants on the estate, they gave encouragement to the immigrants to preserve their own religious beliefs. They helped them with money to build their temples and mosques. They encouraged them to conduct their religious activities through associations . . . As proof of the help given and the control exercised by the estate authorities, it must be stated that the books of these organizations were always open to inspection by a representative of management.[37]

In 1870 a Royal Commission found only two Hindu temples in British Guiana, but by 1917 there were 46 mosques and 43 Hindu temples.[38]

As the planters had opposed the education of the slaves, to keep their laborers more ignorant and therefore more submissive, they now opposed the education of the East Indians. Primary education was legally compulsory in British Guiana beginning in 1876. However, the East Indian children of the sugar estates were rarely sent to school, even after that time. The parents preferred them to go to work as soon as possible and the planters preferred them to have only such training as might fit them for plantation labor.[39]

Into this situation came a new church group to work primarily with the East Indians. The work of the Canadian Presbyterian Church in British Guiana began as an offshoot of their work in Trinidad. The Canadians began their work among the East Indians of Trinidad in 1868, and entered British Guiana in 1885.[40] So, in that decade the church picture came to look as follows:

**TABLE 1[41]—Churches in British Guiana c. 1890.**

| Church | Parishes | Places of Worship [a] | Ministers [b] | Annual Grant (£) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Church of England .. | 13 | 62 | 30 | 11,6000 |
| Church of Scotland .. | 10 | 20 | 11 | 2,700 |
| Roman Catholic .. | — | 16 | 15 | 2,300 |
| Methodist .. .. | — | 5 circuits | 10 | 1,340 |
| Congregational .. | — | 42 chapels | 15 | — |
| Baptist .. | — | 2 chapels | 1 | — |
| Moravian .. | — | 2 chapels | 1 | — |
| Canadian Presbyterian .. | — | 1 chapel | 1 | — |
| Lutheran .. | — | 1 chapel | 1 | — |

[a] Points such as the Berbice River stations of the Lutherans are not included.
[b] Does not include full time lay assistants.

37 Daly, p. 183.
38 Smith, p. 108.
39 Ibid., p. 47, 149.
40 Guiana Graphic, Sunday, March 14, 1948.
41 Source : Rain, p. 375.

The Canadian Presbyterian missionaries were invited into the land by the pastor of St. Andrew's Scots Church. After their arrival the Scots Church gradually withdrew from work among the East Indians, turning over that phase of their work entirely to the Canadian Mission.[42]

Many attempts have been made to explain why the Churches had so much difficulty reaching the East Indians. The Anglican clergyman in New Amsterdam in the last decade of the nineteenth century wrote with pride of having all races in his congregation: White, Black, Chinese, and East Indian. However, he commented concerning the "Coolies" that they cannot sing, but sometimes hum in a "low, melancholy tone, that ends with a tremulous drawn-out note like the bleating of a sheep."[43] Perhaps some appreciation of the musical traditions of India would have been an asset to his ministry.

The Lutheran Church baptismal records show that one East Indian young man was baptized prior to 1890, but there was no special attempt by the church to reach the East Indians until about twenty-five years later.

### F — Mittelholzer's Later Years

When Pastor Mittelholzer returned from Philadelphia in 1890, he was fifty years of age, but had not yet reached the mid-point in his years of service to the Lutheran Church. Undoubtedly a sense of stability was gained by the affiliation with a Lutheran synod in the United States. However, the salary problems which had earlier been so difficult, continued without respite. There is no indication of any concentrated effort to prevent his receiving full salary after 1890; but in spite of continual action on the problem, Mittelholzer saw the amount owed him in back salary continue to increase over the years. He lists the amount owed to him as $1,063.50 in 1892, indicating some repayment of back salary since 1890, but then $2,841 in 1897, $6,164 in 1901, and $10,300 in 1911.[44]

In spite of these salary problems, Mittelholzer proceeded with plans for the renovation of the church on his return from the United States. The renovated church with seating capacity considerably enlarged was rededicated March 6, 1892. Cost of repairs was $5,147.71 (B.G.). Most of this came from the Berbice Lutheran Fund; but at the time of rededication $400.00 had been received from members' offerings.[45] Up to this time the congregation had been known simply as the Lutheran Congregation in Berbice. One exception was in the 1830's when Pastor Junius experimented from time to time with the

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42Cruickshank, p. 95f.

43Crookall, p. 124.

44Minutes, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, passim. Mittelholzer's salary was paid entirely from the Berbice Lutheran Fund. Problems which might have caused difficulty with salary payments : 1) joint church-government control of the fund 2) other demands on the fund 3) the principle of the fund was normally not expended and the interest was subject to considerable fluctuations.

name, "All Saints Lutheran Church."[46] Apparently in connection with this renovation, the congregation was given the name, "Ebenezer,"[47] chosen by Pastor Mittelholzer.

In these years there were special problems in connection with the Amerindian work. One problem was due to their nomadic habits. In 1894 Mittelholzer reported a loss of 15 communing members from Mt. Carmel, Ituni, these persons having "retired back into the depths of the forest."[48] Such habits also resulted in the fluctuation of the number of river stations from time to time.

Another problem was more serious. By this time catechists were employed to look after the work in the absence of the pastor. In a space of ten years, two of these catechists were martyred. The first about 1895.

> Brother Tom, as the catechist was called, had a difficult task to perform. He had to explain the necessity of marriage, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and of being members and regular worshippers in the church. Pastor Mittelholzer visited several of these homes and after obtaining the mutual consent of the couple, married them with a borrowed ring. Some were made members of the church, and even these wanted to know how long they would have to remain such! While others confessed that they had got tired of it, and asked that their names be removed. In the course of time their good catechist was hated by some. One day he was out but did not return. A search being made, his canoe was found securely fastened by the river side. His corpse was picked up two days afterward with marks of violence on the head and arm.[49]

The second catechist, Mr. Benjamin Blair was martyred on Sunday morning, August 5, 1905.

> There was the need of a good deal of reorganization of the whole work. Parents and children were scattered; the school was closed; the services neglected. Others felt that the farther they lived from the church the greater freedom they would enjoy. One of the catechist's neighbors was an Acawoio Indian named Jack, whose tribe painted the face with a bluish, indelible fluid, and who were supposed to use enchantment for the purpose of killing. This man was supposed to be the husband of an Indian woman and her daughter. Mr. Blair never tired of speaking to him gently on the subject, and always advised him to give up the daughter and marry the mother. Jack on the other hand became tired of listening to the reproofs. One day the Indian girl who cooked for

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[45]Vestry Minutes . . . April 4. 1892.
[46]Baptismal record book of the Lutheran Church in Berbice . . .
[47]Means, "stone of help," Note : "The Lord helped us." Above p. 65f.
[48]Minutes, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of East Pennsylvania, 1894; p. 30f.
[49]Kunkle, p. 86; reporting information received from Lutheran catechists Stephen Hartman and W. A. Blair.

the catechist heard a loud cry that came from the direction of the latrine. On going there she found the catechist leaning against the wall with his head bowed, and groaning. Her father was called, and with the aid of others took him down the river to Maria Henrietta. He made repeated efforts to speak but not a word could be understood. He passed to his reward a few days after. It is believed that his death was the result of foul play on the part of the Acawoio, who afterward left the neighborhood.[50]

Catechist Blair left a widow and seven children. One of these children, then a small lad, succeeded his father as catechist at Ituni when he became a man! At the very place where his father had been murdered . . . the son later brought the Gospel of the Prince of Peace. He is now the devoted catechist at St. Paul Church, Maria Henrietta . . .[51]

Also on the river two church buildings were begun. Cornerstones were laid for new church buildings in 1895 at Maria Henrietta, and in 1897 at St. Lust. The new St. Paul Lutheran Church at Maria Henrietta was dedicated with an elaborate service on January 1, 1902. After the watchnight service at Ebenezer, a party of 200 travelled with Ebenezer's old pipe organ. A choir and a band were included. The building at St. Lust, however, was not completed until 1925.

Pastor Mittelholzer died August 22, 1913, after being confined to bed for a year and four months, at the age of 73. He had given 35 years of dedicated service to the church, bringing the Lutheran Church in Berbice from the brink of death to vigorous new life. Under his ministry the church had grown from 11 communing members in 1878 to a peak of 378 in 1912 (See Appendix IV.)

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50**Ibid.**, p. 86f. (same informants).
51**Ibid.**, p. 87. (And now he is a member of the Guyana legislature.)

## CHAPTER V

# THE CHURCH BECOMES A MISSION
# 1914 — 1940

## THE SELF-FULFILMENT OF BIG RIVERS

Slade Hopkinson

Men of my time and country stand rebuked by
The self-fulfilment of big rivers. Constrictions caused
By cataracts, for instance, or the unrusting iron
Of fallen greenheart trunks, cannot be considered
Lenders of mettle to these live waters.
Mettle is the prime property of these waters —
And joy, divine hurdler over boulders, shoals,
The slabbed, butting foreheads of waterfalls,
Mere petty slate or granite interruptions.

Beyond the savannahs, in the Guyana highlands,
The thundering cloud-fist of the arm of God
Flings rain like knives, slicing the Essequibo
Into the landscape loaved with mountains. Born
Are the desire and career of the river.
Its prodigality awes. It permits itself
Intricate whorls, backwashings, forthright leaps,
Fluent extravaganzas in umber and ochre.
Primness is the enemy of beauty. Determination
Is tight, strenuous only. But this river
Follows the compass of its need, ignoring
The congregations of suppliant trees,
The coiled, glutted greed of anacondas,
Macaws and toucans with their shrieks and rainbows,
The poisonous gravel of insects, raping mines,
Protesting islands, waddling steamers, punts,
The serviceable, stilted wharves and stellings —
Longing for its estuary
...

The disestablishment of the favored churches came to pass. The labor union movement was beginning to flex its muscle. Universal primary education was becoming more a fact than an empty statute. And in the meantime, the Lutheran Church was calmly, quietly, and almost imperceptibly being changed from a self-sustaining parish to a heavily subsidized mission, firmly controlled by the United Lutheran Church in America. The church in the United States sought to help the Lutheran Church in British Guiana, and it did in many ways. Another frontier was crossed as the church reached out enthusiastically to the East Indians. For the Lutheran Church in British Guiana, the new affiliation was surely a blessing, but a mixed blessing. The question is whether subjugation was a necessary step on the road to greater self-reliance.

**A — Connection with the Board of Foreign Missions**

After the death of Pastor Mittelholzer, the vestry of Ebenezer wrote to the East Pennsylvania Synod informing them and asking that a pastor be sent. The Rev. Milton H. Stine, D.D., Ph.D., chairman of the Advisory Committee on Home Missions of the synod, the committee which handled the request, volunteered to go. The Ebenezer vestry pledged $1,200 (U.S.) per year for his salary and paid the travelling expenses for Pastor and Mrs. Stine. He sailed with his wife, August 15, 1914, with the stated intention of spending at least one year as pastor and making a careful study of the field and its needs. The church in British Guiana apparently had never received, to this point, any financial support from abroad, and was surely not thinking in terms of any need for subsidy at this time. However, it was soon to be seen that the Lutherans from the United States thought in financial categories which were out of the reach of the church in British Guiana.

On arrival Dr. Stine found that the church and parsonage were in need of repair, the membership had diminished, and church life in general had lapsed during the time of the long terminal illness of Pastor Mittelholzer and since his death. Pastor Stine stayed only three months, then returned to recommend to the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Synod that they accept responsibility for the work. At the meeting of the Board on March 25, 1915, the following motion was passed :

> Resolved, that the Board of Foreign Missions hereby take over the New Amsterdam Mission as a part of its regular work.[1]

An accompanying observation was that a few thousand dollars should be sufficient to reorganize the mission and make it the base to move on into the hinterland among the aborigines. The phrase "hereby take over" in the resolution was probably intended as an innocous description of the transfer from the East Pennsylvania Synod, but turned out to be quite prophetic of a church which had previously stood on its own feet now being eased into a state of dependency. Later in the year the East Pennsylvania Synod conditionally approved the take over. Consistently for the next quarter of a century the Board handled all its dealings with the church in British Guiana through the "missionary in charge." The Rev. Ralph J. White was appointed the first missionary. Quite a number of decisions were left to his discretion and his future negotiations with the Board. The following recommendation was approved by the Board just before his departure :

> The Executive Committee further recommends to the Board that all matters pertaining to the rules governing Mr. White's work there as a missionary of the Board be settled after he gets

[1]Board of Foreign Missions, General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, Thirty-Eighth Report; 1915, p. 69.

on the field and looks into the whole situation. This recommendation refers to salary, length of service there, conditions under which furloughs may be taken to America, development of interior work, relationship to the interior congregations, etc., etc., and all other questions involved in carrying on the Mission.[2]

It is somewhat surprising that the Board had virtually no contact with the local church except through its missionaries. It is much more surprising that the Ebenezer Vestry, which in the past had so epitomized the independent spirit of the traditional Dutch "Kerkeraad," so readily accepted the new situation.

**B — First Missionary Arrives from the United States**

In January of 1916 Pastor Ralph J. White arrived in New Amsterdam, with his wife, to serve as pastor of the Lutheran parish. Congregational pastors had been called upon by Ebenezer congregation to assist during the pastoral vacancies before and after the visit of Dr. Stine, but Pastor White reported finding the work quite disorganized. After about a year there he reported only 125 communing members at Ebenezer and 238 for the parish. This is quite a drop from Pastor Mittelholzer's last report of about six years earlier of 203 communing members at Ebenezer and 362 for the parish.

Soon the church and parsonage were repaired, with half the cost of the latter coming from America. White was anxious to encourage local giving :

> The assistance that the work receives from America is so distributed that it does not in any way destroy the self-reliance of the people. The Board pays for nothing that it is possible for the people to pay for themselves.[3]

However, he had no fear of budget acceleration. He wrote, "It is necessary that our work be extended, and this would be altogether too slow an operation were it necessary to wait for local financing."[4] In his first fourteen months in British Guiana, White recommended to the Board (1) the opening of a High School and (2) three additional missionaries : one for the Berbice River, one for the congregation in New Amsterdam, and one for general administration. Later he urged the establishment of a congregation in Georgetown.

The fact that the missionary staff did not increase as soon as White desired was no fault of the Board's. In July of 1916 the Board called the Rev. H. F. Martin, M.A., to go to open a high school. Nothing came of this. Six months later the Rev. E. H. Mueller arrived, but was refused admission to the Colony. Two months later,

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2Minutes, Board of Foreign Missions of the General Synod, December, 1915, p. 4f.
3White, p. 63.
4Ibid., p. 72.

R. J. Wolff was assigned to go. After another refusal of entry, White suggested that because of the war it might be best to select a man without German name or antecedents.[5]

While in Surinam waiting to get into British Guiana, Pastor Mueller reported that Pastor Boers, Danish Pastor serving the Dutch Lutheran congregation in Paramaribo, recommended that the Lutheran Churches of Surinam and Berbice join with the Lutheran Churches in the Danish West Indies islands of St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix to form a synod of the General Synod.[6] However, in a few months, the islands referred to were sold to the United States and the Lutheran Churches there came under the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America, which the General Synod joined in forming.

In the fall of 1918, Pastor White joined in the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Lutheran Church in Berbice before returning to the United States for a six month furlough. In November, 1918, as the General Synod merged with other synods to form the United Lutheran Church in America, the Church in British Guiana was automatically related to the new body.

Late in 1919, the Rev. Meade Augustus Rugh arrived in British Guiana, with his wife, to assist White in the work. In July, 1920, Pastor Rugh sent a carefully prepared statement to the Board saying that a second missionary was not needed, and then resigned. He returned to the States in the fall of 1920 after 10 months in Berbice.

Pastor White customarily made trips up the Berbice River, visiting the stations there, three or four times a year. He felt that to be insufficient to accomplish much there. On one trip, probably the first, he reports:

> We arrived at St. Lust from St. Paul's Mission on a Sunday afternoon to hold an evening service. The little chapel was packed with people. While . . . preaching there was something about the size of his hand and black and hairy, that dropped from the thatched roof . . . One of the members knocked it to the floor . . . This was our first sight of a full-sized tarantula.
>
> After the service we killed about a half a dozen of those large black fellows . . . After this we got out our folding cots with their mosquito nets, and putting them up in the open chapel, retired. Under the loose floor pigs and goats gruntled and snored, and fleas left pig and goat for a cannibalistic diet. However, after some time, we managed to get to sleep.
>
> After a while the missionary awoke . . . looking out of the corner of his eye he saw something long, black and hairy within a few inches of his face . . . What should he do? To move might invite a venomous sting. To lie still was but to postpone an uncomfortable situation. It was impossible to jump up and

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[5]Minutes, Board of Foreign Missions . . . July 27, December 28, 1916; February 22, September 5, 1917.

[6]Ibid., January 25, 1917.

get away, for the mosquito net enclosed everything in the bed. So he decided to strike . . . You can imagine his surprise and relief when . . . he discovered that the long, black, hairy thing . . . was nothing more dangerous than the fringe of a streamer rug that he was using for a covering."

White was sufficiently impressed by the fauna of Guiana to include in his book the chapter: "Snakes—Insects, Animals and Birds."

C — **Obeah**

A problem which troubled White, as well as many Christian pastors before and after him, was the practice of Obeah. Obeah may refer to anything from marriage counselling to ritual murder, and is generally considered to be based in African religion with accretions from other traditions in Guiana such as those of the East Indians and Amerindians. St. Lust is referred to by White as an active district in the practice of Obeah.

Before the law was passed that made it an offence to even be found with any of the paraphernalia of Obeahism, every moonlight night at St. Lust we could hear the drum of the obeah man calling the people to the comfy dance. The hold that obeahism has on the people of the colony is one of the great mysteries and points to the greatest failure of the Church in this place.

One hundred years ago, a minister writing from Demerara to England said: "A species of witchcraft, called Obeah, is very common among the Negroes. Its efficacy is attributed to some infernal supernatural agency."

. . .

"Obeah" signifies every pretended assumption of supernatural power or knowledge whatever for fraudulent or illicit purposes, or for gain, or for the injury of any person.

Obeah is generally practiced for the purpose of inflicting disease, loss, damage, personal injury, or to cause or divert affection by use of love philtre or charms. The paraphernalia usually consists of a human skull or some other part of the human body, either taken before or after death.

. . .

On the street one day there was pointed out to me the "obeah man" of a prominent Chinese merchant. Many of the blacks and East Indians are in constant fear of obeah. I have known aboriginal Indians to throw away a dispenser's medicine and take their sick for a long journey to an obeah man.[8]

When the Indians came they brought with them a collection of lore which was not basically dissimilar to that possessed by the Africans and there has been a remarkable merging of beliefs and practices into one general colony-wide system common to all. Today the majority of 'Obeah men' are East Indians . . .

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[7]White, p. 75ff.
[8]Ibid., p. 77ff.

. . .

Obeah . . . as things stand today . . . derives as much from European as from African or Indian traditions. A publication entitled **The 6th and 7th Books of Moses or Moses' Magical Spirit-Art,** which is printed in the United States but bears no publisher's name, is widely used as a source book by Obeah men.[9]

The Molly Schultz murder case, in the latter part of the second decade of the century, was the occasion for legislation against Obeah. An estate laborer was afraid of losing his job. An Obeah man told him to get a white child with blue eyes. He snatched up a girl, about five years of age, daughter of the manager of the plantation, and brought her to the Obeah man. The child's eyes were removed while she was still alive for use in Obeah. For her kidnapping, torture, and murder seven men were hanged.[10]

Many of the early missionaries considered Obeah a matter of great importance and concern. One, calling Obeah one of the most trying evils with which missionaries have to deal, told of a man making a death bed confession of poisoning over 300 persons.[11]

An Obeah murder was committed as late as 1950, however Smith speaks of Obeah as not of very great importance today.[12] Swan says that it now exists among a few old people and some fanatics.[13] It may be more prevalent than these scholars think, but there is no doubt that Obeah does not have anything like the hold on the people that it once did. This is quite a contrast with the great strength of similar beliefs in other areas, such as voodoo in Haiti.

Certain other prevalent superstitions, largely considered innocuous and unrelated to Obeah, both by the law and by the general public, probably have come to be considered distinct from Obeah as a result of the way the laws were formulated. Such are beliefs in "old hag" and "baccu." "Old hag" hag is thought to be a witch, not necessarily female, that may be a cause of sickness or death, but not activated by human manipulations. A "baccu" is thought to be a little Dutchman, revived from ancient times, as a sort of mischievous companion, kind to the owner who treats him well.

### D — Lutheran Work with East Indians

In 1918 Catechist Charles Bowen became a catechist of the Lutheran Church. In February of that year Pastor White wrote the Board requesting authority to hire him. The next month he was approved on the condition that it met with the approval of the Anglican Church, with which he was then serving.[14]

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[9] Smith, p. 125f.
[10] White, p. 78f.
[11] Henry W. Case, **On Sea and Land on Creek and River** (London 1910), p. 114f.
[12] Smith, p. 127.
[13] Swan, p. 108.
[14] Minutes, Board of Foreign Missions of the General Synod, March 21, 1918.

Charles Bowen was born in India, of Indian parents, in the town of Gazeepor, Chota Nagpur. His parents died when he was very young and he was cared for in an orphanage of the Gossner Lutheran Church. He knew no other name than Charles Bowen. He was educated in the Gazepor Lutheran Missionary College. At the age of 19 years he and two school friends emigrated to Surinam under the indenture system. Conditions were not what they expected and after a six month stay they slipped across the Corentyne river on a raft to British Guiana. Bowen soon got in touch with Pastor Mittelholzer, with the idea of doing evangelistic work, for which he was trained in India. Unfortunately he was not accepted. Whether this was because of the internal troubles of the Lutheran Church facing Mittelholzer at the time or because of his views on East Indian evangelism we do not know. However, Bowen was soon accepted by the Anglican Church. While at the Kitty Training College he was selected for the Priesthood-vide-report of Coolie Missions 1888-1889 of the Anglican Church. However, for reasons unknown his ordination did not follow, and he served the Anglicans as a catechist until his return to the Lutheran Church in 1918.[15]

By this time a few East Indians had entered into business and professional positions. The desire for education was increasing, even on the estates, where most of them still resided. East Indians became the most numerous race in the Colony as early as 1908; but they provided only 251 of 4,408 voters in 1911, 714 of 4,569 in 1922, and 2,701 voters in 1927.[16] In 1916, a barrister, Joseph Alexander Luckhoo, became the first East Indian elected to the legislature.

Indentured immigration from India was cut off in 1916-17, primarily because of objections in India to the treatment of her people. There were later attempts to reinstitute indentured immigration, but only a few indentured workers were brought into the Colony after 1917. The total indentured immigration from India is listed as 238,760; the total from all other lands, about 101,500.[17]

So it was after the virtual end of indentured immigration during the time that East Indians were beginning to make their presence felt in the life of the towns that the Lutheran Church launched out in East Indian work. Catechist Bowen worked mainly in New Amsterdam with Ebenezer congregation. He read, wrote, and spoke Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic and English. He also read Sanskrit and knew some Tamil. He translated some of the Lutheran services into Hindi and conducted a Hindi service in Ebenezer each Sunday morning before the English service. Catechist Bowen served the church faithfully until his death, December 27, 1924. A number of leaders in the Lutheran Church in the land have come from his family in-

[15]Kunkle, p. 115f.
Biographical data of Charles Bowen, typed, unsigned, undated, information from his sons.
[16]Nath, p. 166ff.
[17]Ibid., p. 141ff., 179f. Specific figures are given by year and by national origin.

cluding his sons, the late Andrew, who served many years as catechist, and Aubrey, who served for many years as the president of the church.

After the death of Catechist Bowen Paul Masih Das was employed as his successor. Catechist Masih Das also served a number of years as a catechist of the Anglican Church before being employed by the Lutherans. Masih Das introduced the use of Indian musical instruments into the Hindi services of the Lutheran Church, something which Catechist Bowen had avoided. During the pastorate of the Rev. Harlow Haas, who had succeeded Pastor White, East Indians began attending the English as well as the Hindi services.[18] However, Ebenezer's Hindi services were well attended until after the mid 1930's and were not discontinued until the 1940's.

By 1927 the East Indian work had been extended to a number of villages and estates near New Amsterdam. Among the first were efforts which eventually led to the formation of the present congregations of St. Thomas, Locaber, and Transfiguration, Betsy Ground. For a number of years the East Indian work was characterised by open air and "bottom house" services, good sized Sunday School, but no adult members except at Ebenezer congregation. It was not until 1941 that the first congregation was formed from the East Indian work. That was St. Thomas, Locaber, which was organized with twenty-two communing members most of whom had been communicants at Ebenezer. From the beginning Luther Leaguers from Ebenezer had served as Sunday School teachers at Locaber.

Although Catechist Masih Das was forty-five years of age when employed by the Lutheran Church, he served faithfully for some twenty-five years before his death.

Haas had asked the Board for an ordained Indian pastor, and a request was sent to India, but none was offered.[19]

**E — Disestablishment**

Certain churches favored by the planters had been receiving funds from the government since 1824. The system of aid then inaugurated continued for about ninety-seven years. The decision to disestablish had been made a number of years earlier.

When A. B. Brown, who became the first full-blooded African member of the legislature began to campaign for his seat, an Anglican minister, the Rev. J. G. Pearson launched a racial attack against him, writing articles for publication including such as the following :

> . . . we owe it to the Negro to think for him, to help him by placing over him trustworthy men, armed with almost feudal authority to enforce such social duties as devolve upon him, and so save him from himself. . . We legislate as men for men; and

[18]The Rev. Aubrey Roy Bowen, D.D., interview, May 2 and 3, 1967.
[19]Minutes, Board of Foreign Missions, United Lutheran Church in America; March 26, 1925.

so far as men are concerned all is well, but the Negro is a child. [20]

The Anglican Bishop at that time was opposed to having "native" ministers, and those who did make their way into the Anglican ministry were placed in remote rural churches, because, the Bishop said, he could not allow them to preach to white congregations. [21]

Brown put his case to the voters as follows :

> If you remember, that gentleman (Rev. John George Pearson) wrote an article in Timehri, and . . . said that for 20 years he has been labouring among Negroes and his 20 years' experience came to this : that it was high time that the Negroes be enslaved again . . . Now gentlemen I may tell you that the plank on which we art to stand or fall is disestablishment. [22]

Brown was an ardent Congregationalist and thereby had additional reasons for opposing establishment. In 1899, two years after his election, a policy of disestablishment was agreed upon by the government.

More than twenty years late White writes :

> Last year a kind of disestablishment was brought about by assigning the following amounts of interest-bearing government bonds to the different churches :

| | |
|---|---|
| The Church of England .. .. .. | $350,350 |
| The Church of Scotland .. .. .. | 87,660 |
| The Church of Rome .. .. .. | 113,210 |
| The Wesleyan .. .. .. .. | 75,000 |
| The Moravian .. .. .. .. | 6,380 |
| The Lutheran .. .. .. .. | 3,620 |
| The Salvation Army .. .. .. | 3,190 |
| Total .. .. .. | $639,410 |

> In addition to the above amounts the Churches of England, Scotland, and Rome receive this year $26,342.00 which amount is to be gradually reduced per annum until it is eliminated at the end of twenty-five years. [23]

An earlier report from Pastor White had indicated to the Board :

> . . . the English Church may be disestablished, in which event we ought to be ready for more aggressive work. [24]

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20J. G. Pearson, "The Negro's Grievance," West Indian Quarterly (1885-1886), pp. 141-142. Quoted in Daly, p. 298.
21Daly, p. 298.
22Ibid., quoting an article in ' The Echo, January, 1897.
23White, p. 40f.
24Minutes, Board of Foreign Missions of the General Synod, December 28, 1916.

Haas expressed similar sentiments to the Board after the disestablishment. This resulted in a second catechist for the East Indian work. However, there was no unusual decrease in Anglican work or increase in Lutheran work that was attributable to disestablishment. The terms of disestablishment were not certainly such as to suggest the necessity for any immediate retrenchment.

In fact, it was during this period that the situation was regularised, with the token payments brought up to date, in connection with an Anglican lease of Lutheran property in New Amsterdam for the purpose of work with the East Indians. In 1876 the land was leased for ninety-nine years at one shilling per annum with the stipulation that "should the Coolie church to be erected thereon at any time be discontinued the land shall immediately revert to the Lutheran community." [25]

There is no question but that the initation and the continuation of the church establishment in the colony had been motivated and formed according to the defensive views of vested interests. However, it must be noted that at present virtually all of the people of the land are at least nominally Christian except the East Indians. Further, this was accomplished largely through the efforts of the established churches, the last major out-reach being the Roman Catholic expansion in the interior among the Amerindians in the decade immediately prior to disestablishment. Also, it must be noted that resentment against the former established churches has diminished considerably in recent years as the churches have shown more sensitivity to the situation of disadvantaged people.

On the other hand it is quite possible that any repressive tendencies in the established churches were restricted and tempered by the presence of the large, active, and vocal Congregational denomination which had been formed through the efforts of the London Missionary Society. This presence was most fully felt in the nineteenth century. In 1894, when there were few Africans in British Guiana left untouched by the Gospel, the London Missionary Society began withdrawing its support in favor of the "claims of the heathen world." [26] In 1891 there were 15 Congregational ministers and 42 congregations, or preaching points. Typical of the situation was the large Congregational Church in New Amsterdam which seated 1,500 and was often packed. In 1944 there were 8 Congregational ministers and 38 congregations, or preaching points. Typical of that situation was the large church in New Amsterdam, again, which still seated 1,500, but longed for the days when the building appeared the right size for the congregation.[27]

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[25] Vestry Minutes, 176 . . . Sept. 9, 1876.

[26] McDonald, p. 104ff. quoting Caldecott, **The Church in the West Indies**, p. 248.

[27] **Ibid.**
Crookall, p. 108.

The presence of the Lutheran Church on the list of those remunerated in connection with disestablishment has been a curiosity to many. It does not seem that Ebenezer congregation ever received any government aid. White points to the answer as he writes:

> We have received the past year from the Government, Bonds amounting to $3,620.00, paying interest at 5 per cent., the income from which is to be used towards paying these Catechists on the River.[28]

Apparently Pastor Mittelholzer negotiated the beginning of aid to the Lutheran Church in connection with the interior expansion of the Church on the Berbice River.

### F — A Variety of Pastoral Approaches

On Christmas Day of 1923 the Rev. Harlow Edgar Haas arrived in New Amsterdam to succeed Pastor White, who left the next month to go as a missionary to Argentina. Haas was an activist with a flair for the dramatic and a special concern for the economic problems of the people. His successor, the Rev. R. H. Daube, was an enthusiastic exponent of Buchmanism, or the Oxford Group Movement. Next came the Rev. W. T. Benze, who was considered to have high church tendencies and was accused of bringing with him a trunk full of crucifixes, and who laboured for a return from Buchmanism to Lutheranism among the people.

In 1923, the year that Haas arrived, the Lutheran mission in British Guiana reported 256 communing members. After peaking at 424 in 1933, the mission reported only 262 communing members in 1936, the year Benze departed. It may be that this rise and subsequent fall in membership was largely due to the variety of approaches of Pastors, which left many of the people confused. Another factor was the financial depression of the 1930's, with the Lutheran mission beginning to feel the financial pinch as early as 1930, then having to cope with a drastic reduction in subsidy in 1933. The progress of the work of the Lutherans, as well as that of other churches in the colony, seemed at times to rise and fall according to the varying level of subsidy. Another reason for fluctuation in membership was the health of missionaries. Malaria was the worst problem, afflicting White during a good part of his first term, Counts, during most of his stay during Daube's furlough, Benze, during much of his time there, and his successor, Machetzki.

In the last days of 1923, as White was preparing to leave and the ministry of Haas was beginning, three beautiful art windows were unveiled above the altar of Ebenezer as a memorial to Pastor Mittelholzer on the tenth anniversary of his death. Among the speakers was the Hon. J. A. Abbensetts, mayor of New Amsterdam, descendant

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[28]White, p. 71.

of slaves, and great grandson of Ludwig Abbensetts, who was prominent among the founders of the Lutheran Church in Berbice.

At this time the problem of Pastor Mittelholzer's unpaid salary was still a live issue. In 1904, when he was a widower with eight children, Pastor Mittelholzer had married Helen Sievewright Stoby. No children came of the second marriage. After his death his widow, and some of his children, claimed that his six years' unpaid salary was still due to his beneficiaries. The government-appointed trustees of the Berbice Lutheran Fund did not accept this as a legitimate legal claim. However, in 1915, after a joint meeting of the trustees and the Lutheran Vestry at which a moral obligation was recognized, Mrs. Mittelholzer's pension was raised from $15 to $18 per month, and two of his daughters, one unmarried, the other widowed were given $150 each (B. G.). However, continual pleas were made by Mrs. Mittelholzer or certain of his daughters, including the years of 1922, 1931, and 1935.

In 1925 the Lutheran Industrial School a bold venture of Pastor Haas was dedicated in a most impressive manner. This was a pioneer endeavor in British Guiana in manual arts and commercial studies.

> . . . the school was opened by His Excellency Sir Graeme Thomson, K. C. B., Governor of British Guiana. Addresses were given by Major W. Bain Gray, Commissioner of Education, and His Worship the Mayor, Hon. J. A. Abbensetts, M. C. P. . . .[29]

Letters of congratulations were then read from President Knubel of the United Lutheran Church in America and from Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States of America. President Coolidge wrote:

> My dear Rev. Haas:
> . . . I rejoice when work of this kind in distant lands is carried to a successful conclusion by Americans. . .[30]

Afterward, Haas wrote the Board describing the occasion and adding, "I was hoping that there could be something from the Board."

By the end of the year the Lutheran Industrial School had enrolled 150 boys in woodworking and 30 persons in shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping, with Mrs. Haas handling the commercial instruction. Also a printing press had been added. In 1926 a dormitory was built for the Berbice River boys. Early customers for furniture from the School included Governor Thomson.

Many people were drawn to the church from all sections of the community, especially young people. Pastor Haas reported that in 1926 the attendance had doubled from the previous year.

July 15, 1927, Pastor and Mrs. R. H. Daube arrived as missionaries to replace Pastor and Mrs. Haas, who left a month and a half later.

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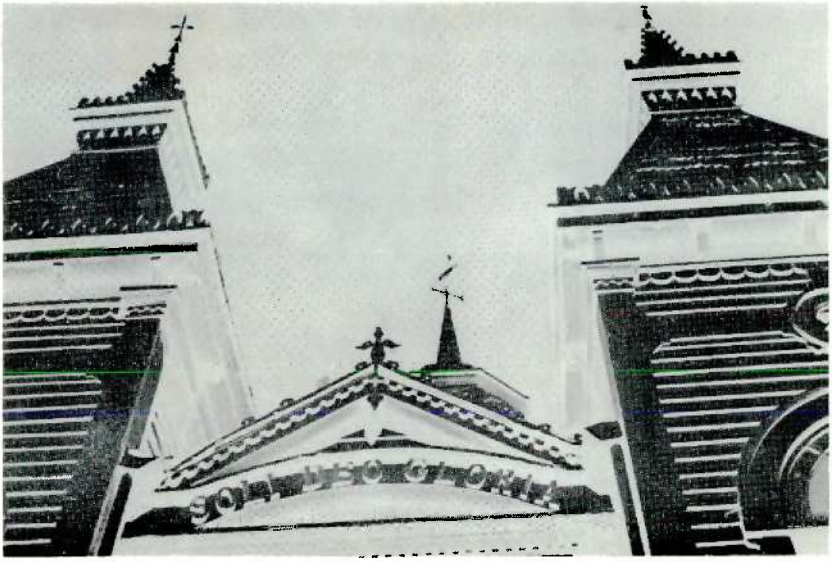
[29]Annual Report, Board of Foreign Missions, United Lutheran Church in America, 1925, p. 193.
[30]Ibid., p. 194.

## EBENEZER LUTHERAN CHURCH — NEW AMSTERDAM



As the church appeared in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Interior — As it appeared until the 1950's.

Then in January, 1929, New Brunswick Independent Congregational Church, Germania, and Fearn Independent Congregational Church, Fearn, were received into the Lutheran Church. Haas had been approached by representatives of these congregations as early as May, 1927, after the death of the pastor who had served them for many years, the Rev. R. T. Frank.

During Pastor Haas' term, it was a mystery to many how he financed all of the operations which were instituted. Part of the mystery was cleared up January 1, 1928 to May 1, 1930 with the settlement of $6,000 indebtedness.

In 1930 the effects of the financial depression were beginning to be felt. This was true not only in connection with Board subsidy, but also with local offerings. Offerings at Ebenezer reached a high point of $691 (B.G.) in 1929 and did not come close to that again for another ten years. However, in 1932 the Lutheran mission inaugurated the New Amsterdam Y.M.C.A., purchased its first automobile, and purchased a tent-boat and outboard motor.

Then in 1933 reductions in subsidy from the Board together with a reduction of about 40% in the exchange rate of the U.S. dollar brought considerable financial problems to the mission. So the following steps were taken: visits of the pastor up the Berbice River were reduced from quarterly to semi-annually, salaries were reduced, workers were discharged, and the operation of the Industrial School with the exception of the Lutheran Press, was turned over to the government, which rented the facilities. The press was retained because it was consistently profit-making.

By this time the work with the East Indians seemed to be taking on considerable significance, providing the greatest potential for growth in the church. So after Pastor Daube's first and second terms missionaries who had served in India were sent to relieve him. When Daube returned from a fifteen month furlough in October, 1931, he found his furlough replacement, the Rev. Paul M. Counts, seriously ill with malaria. The same malady plagued his next furlough replacement, the Rev. W. Theodore Benze. Benze, as Counts, had come just to relieve Daube for his furlough. However, Daube did not return again, and Benze, despite his ill health tried to hang on until another replacement arrived.

During his stay, Pastor Benze tried to do many things to make church life more truly Lutheran. The following incident may be typical of the problems involved. One Sunday Pastor Benze had the pulpit and lectern at Ebenezer switched to what he had learned to be their historic and proper places. The next Sunday before the service members of the vestry switched them back to what had always been their placement at Ebenezer. The next Sunday the pastor shifted them again.[31]

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[31]Bowen,, interview, 1967.
W. T. Benze, interview, January 10, 1968.

## G — Guianese Pastors

In October of 1936 the second Guianese pastor in the long history of the Lutheran Church in the land returned to be ordained. Pastor Aubrey Roy Bowen was ordained at Ebenezer, on instructions from the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, by Pastor Benze, who then left in November. Bowen had not been considered by the Board for financial assistance, and had entered Wittenberg College in 1929 as a protege of Pastor Haas, who negotiated for his scholarship. With the scholarship, odd jobs, and loans, he was enabled to pursue studies leading to the degrees of B.A., M.A., and B.D. before his return. Until the departure of Benze, Pastor Bowen was responsible for the Berbice River congregations; then he was in charge of all the work of the mission until the arrival in 1937 of Dr. Paul O. Machetzki, who had served for a number of years as a missionary to Argentina.

Pastor Bowen found that a number of people had left the Lutheran Church, the attendance at Ebenezer had dropped from an average attendance of 150 to an average of 20, the congregation at Germania had left the Lutheran fold, and the congregation at Fearn had withdrawn to a somewhat independent position. After seeing some life return to Ebenezer and normal relationships resumed with the congregations at Germania and Fearn, Bowen began writing the Board urging the opening of Lutheran work in Georgetown. This step had previously been urged by Mittelholzer, White, and Haas.

In February, 1938, the Mission council was formed, with the first members Pastor and Mrs. Machetzki and Pastor Bowen. About the same time Pastor Bowen was authorized by the Board to make a survey in Georgetown to assist in determining the advisability of Lutheran work there. Bowen wrote a highly optimistic report of his survey in reporting to the Board. He did this, not so much because the findings of his survey called for it, but rather because of his deep feeling of the future importance of expanding the Lutheran work to the capital city of the Colony.[32]

By this time it was apparent that there were differences of opinion concerning polity within the Mission Council. A letter for clarification was secured from the Board and read at a meeting of the Council. Following are minuted excerpts from the letter:

> . . . the National Ordained Pastors are not the representatives of the Board nor are they independent in their assigned pastorate. They are responsible in all their mission work to the missionary in charge . . . Any national ordained pastor may appeal to the

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[32]Minutes, Mission Council, Lutheran Mission in British Guiana, February 7 to May 30, 1938; Bowen, A. R., "A Short Biography of Rev. Aubrey Roy Bowen," typewritten; Bowen, interviews, 1967.

Board against any decision of the Mission Council but his appeal must be sent to the Board through the official correspondent.

The Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America delegates to its missionary in British Guiana full authority for the conduct of its mission work in all its details.[33]

Then on July 16, 1938, Patrick A. Magalee returned from his studies in the United States and was ordained by Pastor Machetzki on instructions from the Nebraska Synod. Magalee had been brought into the Lutheran Church as a convert by Pastor Haas. He had been employed by the church as a printer in 1926, and as Business Manager of the Mission and Manager of the Lutheran Press from 1928 to 1934, when he went to the United States under the sponsorship of the Board to study for the ministry. Magalee studied at Carthage, Gettysburg, and Northwestern Lutheran Seminary, where he received the degrees of B.A., B.D., and M.S.T.

On September 1, with authorization for expansion to Georgetown in hand, the Mission Council, or missionary in charge, assigned Bowen to Georgetown. Bowen had just had time to get well acquainted with his work on the Berbice River, had just been married to Miss Irene Ramdeholl in June, and was struggling to set up house in New Amsterdam. He felt that Magalee, who was single and who had not yet been given a specific assignment in the church, should be the one to go. Magalee expressed his willingness to be placed anywhere. The decision to send Bowen to Georgetown stood, but he refused to go. He saw a variance in the policy of the United Lutheran Church in America as applied in the United States in comparison with what he was facing in British Guiana. He felt it to be an irregularity for him to be assigned to leave his charge involuntarily and take up another. Machetzki cabled the Board and a cable was received in reply stating that Bowen should go immediately to Georgetown to start work there.[34]

Bowen took his bride to Georgetown and began work. There were many well established congregations of other denominations in Georgetown, and Bowen was interested in doing needed work, rather than competing, so he centered on the section of the city in Albouystown known as Hell's Kitchen, where there was no church. In this neighbourhood, considered one of economic, social, and moral blight, services were begun October 9, 1938. In his survey, Pastor Bowen had found 18 adult Lutherans in Georgetown; but at the first service, in addition to himself and wife, there was in attendance only one little girl, Jean Lachmansingh. From this inauspicious beginning the work began to move. Before long Sunday School attendance had passed 100, and for the year 1939, there were 28 communing members reported in the

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[33]Minutes, Mission Council, May 9, 1938.
[34]Minutes, Mission Council, passim.
Bowen, interview, 1967.
Patrick A. Magalee, interview, May, 1967.

new congregation, Epiphany. By the late 1940's Epiphany had become the second largest in communing membership of the congregations of the church, a position it was to hold for some time. (See Appendix VI.).

Concerning Pastor Magalee, Machetzki reports:

> For the present it was deemed wise not to install him as Pastor of any particular congregation. This proved a blessing when later in the year your missionary became ill, and all the pastoral work in New Amsterdam as well as the river stations fell upon Pastor Magalee's shoulders.[35]

Pastor Machetzki was afflicted with both malaria and heart attacks. For much of his term from 1937 to 1940 he directed the work from a sick room, forcing himself into the pulpit on Sundays to preach to a congregation afflicted with internal tensions.[36]

However, with the efforts of the two young Guianese pastors and four catechists, the work flourished. The communing membership for the entire mission went from 415 in 1938 to a new all time high of 560 in 1939, then to 652 in 1940.

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[35]Annual Report, Board of Foreign Missions, United Lutheran Church in America, 1938, p. 76.

[36]Kunkle, p. 100.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN BRITISH GUIANA 1940 — 1965

## YOU ARE INVOLVED

**Martin Carter**

This I have learnt:
today a speck
tomorrow a hero
hero or monster
you are involved!
you are consumed!

Like a jig
shakes the loom.
Like a web
is spun the pattern
all are involved!
all are consumed!

In connection with the 200th Anniversary of the Lutheran church in British Guiana, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana was constituted. As the church celebrated the anniversary, it was in the midst of a time of rapid expansion in many aspects of the church's life.

Simultaneously, but not having a large amount of direct bearing on the rapid expansion of the church, the population of the land began a rapid increase.

The Colony also acquired a new constitution and elections were held for the first time under universal adult suffrage. The new breed of politicians that was elected began making sounds which unnerved the colonial authorities, and the constitution was suspended.

Shortly afterward, problems in the Lutheran Church in the colony resulted in its constitution being suspended except for certain formalities. For the record, this move in the Lutheran church was at its own request. However, one cannot help wondering whether there might have been some parallel in the way the pattern was spun in the formation of British colonial government policy in relation to British Guiana and the formation of American Lutheran foreign mission policy in relation to the Lutheran church in British Guiana.

In any event, the church continued its rapid growth, with subsidy, perhaps, growing the most rapidly of all aspects of the church's life. But there was a limit to the level that subsidy would be permitted to reach, and as subsidy began to level off, most other aspects of church growth also abated.

## A — A Church on the Move

In 1940 the Rev. Howard R. Kunkle began a three year term as missionary in charge of the Lutheran Mission in British Guiana. The church was expanding both geographically and numerically, and was soon to be constituted.

After Georgetown, the next geographical expansion was to the East Coast, Demerara. In 1940 Reginald L. Singh, a free lance evangelist, became a catechist of the Lutheran Church. Several of the points that he had been serving were then considered a part of the Lutheran work. The first of these to be organized as a congregation was St. Andrew, Le Ressouvenir, in 1941, with 19 communing members. Singh had been confirmed a Roman Catholic in 1910 when he was 11 years of age. Feeling then safe from harm, he plunged into a life of reckless living. Shortly before his affiliation with the Lutherans, Singh was considered by doctors to be on his death bed. He pledged his life to the Lord if he should recover. He did recover and set about to fulfill his promise, preaching wherever people would listen to him.[1]

Also in 1941 a congregation and primary school were established at De Velde, which is on the Berbice River quite near the site of old Fort Nassau where the Lutheran Church first came to Berbice in 1743. The initiative for this move came from Herman Alfred Leps, a grandson of Isaac Sander, a brother of Pastor Johan Sander, who confirmed Pastor Mittelholzer. Leps was educated under Pastor Mittelholzer, but then returned to the river to become a talented "bushman."[2]

Among the congregations established in 1942 and 1943 were Mt. Zion, Sand Hills, Demerara River, and Christ, Seafield, West Coast, Berbice. The Lutheran Church entered both places on request, taking over previously established primary schools. Both J. R. Gray, who was operating the school at Sand Hills, and F. B. Miller, operating the one at Seafield, were employed as catechists of the Lutheran Church. Christ, Seafield, with 49 communing members, had a larger initial membership than any other Lutheran congregation organised in British Guiana in this century. Of the twelve congregations organised in 1941, 1942, and 1943, Christ is the only one which was begun with more than 22 communing members. Four were organized with less than five communing members. The church seems to have been operating as if the message had been heard, "Now abideth faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is hope." As it completed its second century, the church saw its present as bright and its future as brighter.

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[1]**The Southern Cross**, May-June, 1950, p. 8.
Bowen, interview, 1967.
Kunkle, p. 139ff.

[2]**The Southern Cross**, May-June, 1955, p. 4.
Kunkle, p. 144ff. A "bushman" is one skilled in making his way through the "bush," or jungle usually utilizing his skills in the jungle for a commercial livelihood.

## B — The 200th Anniversary

In 1943 the Lutheran church in British Guiana celebrated the bicentennial of its birth. Among the special guests present was Pastor D. A. Hockstra of the Lutheran church in Surinam, which had celebrated its bicentennial just two years before.

His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, was among the dignitaries present in June at Fort Nassau for the official opening of the old fort as an historic site to be administered by the Lutheran church. About twenty years later the site was reclaimed by the government because of the failure of the church to maintain the property against the encroaching jungle.

Also as a part of the commemoration, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana was constituted as a church amenable to the United Lutheran Church in America. This was considered a great step forward from the previous status of a Lutheran Mission. Pastor Patrick A. Magalee was elected the first president of the church. The administrative authority of Guianese was restricted by such measures as retaining the office of church treasurer to be filled by Board appointment. The church was free to act on its own initiative as long as it acted in a way which the Board could accept.

Among the goals which had been set for the anniversary celebration were: 15 congregations, 10 preaching points, 900 communing members, and greater self support. All were reached except the latter.

From the end of 1938 to the end of 1943 the following increases were recorded: pastors, 33%; catechists, 233%; congregations, 217%; preaching points, 333%; communing members, 149%; local offerings, 313%; subsidy, 344%. It is evident that the number of congregations and preaching points was increasing considerably faster than the communing membership; the number of catechists was increasing tremendously faster than the number of pastors; and the subsidy was increasing so fast that the rapidly increasing local offerings were not sufficient to prevent a decline in percentage of self support. (See Appendix V.)

Another significant step taken as a part of the bicentennial celebrations was the initiation of offerings for evangelistic work in India. This symbolic move to make the church a sending as well as receiving church was soon followed by the inclusion of Africa in the appeals.

## C — Church Growth Continues

The rapid growth of the church continued in the years following the anniversary celebration. From the end of 1943 to the end of 1953 the following increases were recorded: pastors, 75%; catechists, 100%; congregations, 110%; communing members, 109%; local offerings, 306%; subsidy, 355%. Still, subsidy was escalating more rapidly than any of the other categories mentioned.

With the rapid increase in growth, a Catechists' training school was operated on a formal basis from 1947 to 1957. The president's report to the convention of the church in 1947 included this appeal:

> Permit me to urge every Catechist and Lay worker to do all they can in establishing Sunday Schools wherever it is possible to get together even 15 boys and girls. It is here we plant the seed for the establishment of the Church of Christ.[3]

This seems to have been the approach in church extension throughout the time when the church was experiencing its most rapid growth, primarily the 1940's. There was very little overall planning to determine which might be the best areas for the church to open work. Instead, each worker was encouraged to expand wherever he found it possible to do so. The proper first step was considered to be the opening of a Sunday School. The next step might be the institution of worship services. Then, perhaps a Lutheran League would be formed. However, as long as a Sunday School could be maintained, it was to be continued, even if worship services could not be successfully begun. Difficulty in getting past the Sunday School stage was generally attributed to the lack of a proper building. There were instances of buildings built almost entirely with Board funds when a communing membership at the place of the building was still a future hope. After worship services were begun, the next step was the confirmation class. Whenever any persons were ready for confirmation, a congregation was formed with four, twelve, or twenty communing members. As a result, the church today includes a number of small congregations which are probably too close to each other.

Under this system of church extension it is natural that Sunday School membership grew faster than any other category of membership. The number of Sunday School pupils was 277 in 1936, 886 in 1941, 1,440 in 1943, 3,010 in 1946, and 4,235 in 1952.

When a congregation failed to grow as expected, the lack of a proper building was commonly given as the reason. In 1943 the Board had placed a top limit of 75% for the proportion of subsidy for a church building. This was apparently an attempt to turn the tide of an increasing proportion of subsidy. Many church buildings before this had been built with subsidy of no more than half the total cost. But as time went on, the Board relaxed its policies further and began paying up to 95% or more of building costs.

Particularly noteworthy during these years was the stewardship of the Berbice River congregations. The congregations of this parish consistently led all the other parishes of the church in gifts in kind and often in total offerings. Stewardship was emphasized through the church in these years; and in 1954 Mr. Cyril S. Chu, a leading

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[3]Minutes: Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana, no. 26, February 10-16, 1947, p. 9.

layman of the church, became the first from Guiana to join the Lutheran Laymen's Movement for stewardship of the United Lutheran Church in America.

## D — Population and Health

Down through the years British Guiana was a particularly unhealthful place to live. Especially in Chapters I, II, and V we have highlighted the problem. The high rates of sickness and death were general throughout the population. In recent years, however, a great change has taken place. In the period 1931-1935 crude birth rate per 100 in British Guiana was 32.2, while crude death rate per 100 was 22.5. Particularly in the 1940's the birth rate began to rise and the death rate began to decline. In the 1957-1961 period the birth rate had risen to 43.5 per 1,000 and the death rate had dropped to 10.0 per 1,000. Newman considers health services and medical care quite important in both the rise of the birth rate and the fall of the death rate. He has made a study attributing about 40% of the rapid population growth in British Guiana in the post-war period to the virtual eradication of malaria which was accomplished in the 1945-1947 period.[4]

The population growth experienced in recent years has affected life in the land in many ways. In 1921 less than one third of a population of 288,540 was under 15 years of age. In 1960 almost half of a population of 534,956 was below that age.[5] The narrow coastal strip of land where the vast majority of the people live and work cannot continue indefinitely to support a rapidly increasing population with an agriculturally oriented economy. The land which was for centuries an importer of laborers has now become an area of labor surplus. Whether one thinks of concerns that are economic, humanitarian, or evangelistic, one must see the change.

## E — New Political Developments

For many years the political and judicial system of British Guiana only gradually moved away from the system inherited from Dutch times. English became the official language in 1812, just nine years after uninterrupted British control began. But in the 1840's Barton Premium, a planter, was speaking in the spirit of the planters of the times when he praised the Dutch for devising a legislative system which effectively kept out the laboring classes.[6] The system included property ownership and annual income level as qualifications for voters. These qualifications were modified somewhat over the years under pressures from the rising merchant classes. The old Dutch constitution was replaced in 1928. However, it was not until after World

[4]Peter Newman, British Guiana: Problems of Cohesion in an Immigrant Society (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 33ff.

[5]Ibid. pp. 39, 43. The figures given do not include the Amerindian population listed at 9150 in 1921 and 25,450 in 1960. These are census figures which tell more about census coverage of Amerindians than about their population growth.

[6]Daly, p. 252.

War II that extensive changes in the qualifications for voting were effected.

Then in 1953 a new constitution provided for the elimination of property and income qualifications for both voters and candidates. There was universal suffrage for all persons 21 years of age including illiterates. A new day had dawned in the political life of British Guiana.

In 1943 there were only about 60,000 registered voters. This was under liberalized regulations, with only 13,500 registered previously. Then in 1953, there were 152,429 valid votes cast from among 208,939 registered voters, and a new breed of politician was put into office.

At that election control of the legislature was gained by the People's Progressive Party, bringing to center stage the two figures who have dominated the political scene in the country ever since. Dr. Cheddi Jagan returned to British Guiana in 1943 after completing dental studies in the United States. Both he and his American wife were passionately interested in politics, taking a Marxist view of British Guiana's situation. In 1950 he formed the People's Progressive Party in partnership with L. F. S. Burnham, a barrister who had just returned from training in London in 1949.

The British government had envisioned a gradual transition in a smooth and orderly way to eventual local self-government. The control of the legislature by one political party was a surprise. The programme of radical social change proposed by that party was a shock. After the election in April of 1953 the constitution was suspended by the British authorities in October. This step was taken more from fear of what might happen than from reaction to what had happened. The official reason given for the take over was to protect the country against Communism.

> . . . there was at that time a sort of unwritten code of behaviour expected of colonial politicians; it was assumed that they would take a radical, nationalist, and usually left-wing line, be swept into power . . . then, realizing the responsibility of office, become moderates in a partnership with British officials and foreign business men.[7]

If the leaders of the People's Progressive Party understood these assumptions, they did not accept them.[8] But the suspension of the constitution changed the picture. In the complex maneuvering that followed, both Jagan and Burnham claimed leadership of the PPP for a time. Each held meetings, elected officers, and published a weekly called "Thunder." Then in 1957 Burnham joined with others in forming the People's National Congress and left the PPP to Jagan. Both Jagan and Burnham seem to have made strenuous efforts to main-

[7]Smith., p. 173.
[8]Ibid.

tain, at least at executive level, a broadly based party. However, behind the scenes pressures have resulted in a racial polarization. The East Indians support Jagan and the Negroes support Burnham. This racial bifurcation has permeated much of society. Riots, strikes arson, and looting have errupted again and again. The years 1961-1964 were particularly turbulent. Rather than being directed against the colonial power, the violence was almost entirely between factions within the colony. Speaking of the problems in terms of racial polarization is perhaps a simplistic highlighting of what seems to be the crux of a very complex interweaving of divisions involving race, skin shade, class, status, politics, and religion.[9]

### F — Church Constitution Almost Suspended

After the national constitution was suspended, a parallel development came to pass in the Lutheran Church. In 1953 Pastor Patrick Magalee resigned from the Lutheran ministry after being implicated in a court case instituted by Catechist Edward Latchman, who had been working under him. Although the competence of the court was not questioned, there was a sharp difference of opinion in the church concerning whether Magalee was guilty or whether the evidence in court against him was basically fabricated or misguided. In 1954 there was a combined loss of 191 communing members in 8 of the congregations that Pastor Magalee had been serving. Other congregations had seen their major losses earlier. Some lost more than half their communing membership. There was no drop in the communing membership of the church as a whole, but the growth rate was slowed considerably.

There were other problems which were intensified in these times. National pastors, catechists, and missionary pastors were in sharply defined, separate, and often conflicting categories. There were divisions not only between these groups but also within them. Pastor Aubrey Bowen, who had been elected the second president of the church in 1949, presided over a divided church, with certain factions openly expressing lack of confidence in his leadership.

In 1956 the Board succeeded in getting the church in convention to agree to set up an Administrative Committee to handle the decision making responsibilities of the church. This committee, later called the Administrative Council, was to have its chairman as well as the majority of its members appointed by the Board. The constitution was almost suspended, but not quite. The elected executive and the convention of the church continued to function, but they were relegated to largely symbolic and ceremonial roles. They also served as forums for discussion and study. The convention was also hopefully to be an inspirational gathering where the zeal of the faithful would be kindled.

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9Attention to some of the complexity is given in Smith, p. 42 et passim, and throughout Jayawardena. Also helpful are the novels of Edgar Mittelholzer, grandson of Pastor J. R. Mittelholzer, such as **The Life and Death of Sylvia, The Children of Kaywana, the Harrowing of Hubertus,** and **Kaywana Blood.**

From 1953 to 1957 communing membership in the church grew only 14%. Local church offerings showed a healthier increase of 36% but subsidy from the Board grew by 43%. Even though the rate of increase in subsidy was considerably diminished, it still outpaced the otherwise healthy looking increase in local offerings.

Soon after the court case, Catechist Latchman left for the United States, where he is still an active Lutheran layman. Pastor Magalee became a layman in the Lutheran Church at home, and has remained quite active in the church ever since. He is presently serving as chairman of a church committee to study how greater indigenization might be beneficially effected in the Lutheran Church in Guyana.

**G — The Administrative Council Period**

In 1956 Pastor Wallace Wolff was appointed the first chairman of the Administrative Committee (later, Council). This was thought to be an emergency system which would soon give way to a new constitution. However, the post was filled by Pastor William Cox in 1959; and subsequently Pastors Cristhilf, Henne, and Bone served in the position until the Administrative Council gave way to the elected Executive Committee under a new constitution in 1966. The constitution of 1943, which was still more or less in force, states that the church is "amenable to the Board." During these times, with the elected executive subordinated to a Board-appointed committee, the church was very much amenable.

However, church growth continued. From 1957 to 1961 communing membership increased 32%, congregations 11%, pastors 140%, and local offerings 111%. Subsidy increased only 35% and the number of catechists declined. In the division of periods we have used, since the 1930's this is the first time that subsidy has not been the fastest growing of all the categories. (See Appendix V.)

The growth of the Lutheran Church was a source of amazement. None of the other Christian Churches of any size were growing rapidly. Almost all had grown rapidly only in the previous century. A Presbyterian Missionary Pastor remarked, "The other denominations watch the Lutheran explosion with awe and some trepidation, wondering where it will all end."[10]

Before long Lutherans were wondering why it all ended. From 1961 to 1965 communing membership, pastors, catechists, local offerings, subsidy, Sunday Schools, Sunday School membership, Luther Leagues, and Luther League membership all showed declines. Only the number of congregations increased slightly. Many fruitless efforts have been made to determine the reasons for the declines. (See below, p. 121f.

Subsidy reached its peak in 1962. (See Appendix V.) By 1955, 22 of the 44 congregations had church buildings, and by 1960, 38 of 49.

[10]McDonald, Alexander Sutherland, "A Divided Church in a Divided Nation: British Guiana." S. T. M. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1960; typewritten, p. 111.

But there were also other buildings: catechists' houses, parsonages, schools . . . In the first seven months of 1951, 35 buildings were built or improved, including 11 catechists' houses. Beyond this, 45 more buildings were said to be needed.[11] In virtually all of the buildings built during the 1950's the Board provided more than 90% of costs. Often the entire cost was assumed by the Board.

In 1956, there were 79 students receiving secondary school tuition aid from the Lutheran Church. This was part of the church's leadership training programme. Many fine leaders were helped while the programme was in effect, but there was some question whether the benefits balanced the detriments and the programme was later discontinued. It was a source of resentment, discontentment, and it provided an ulterior motive for church membership.

At the convention in February of 1959, it was reported that there were ten students overseas being supported as ministerial proteges of the church. Four dropped by the wayside before completing their studies. Four served from one and a half to five years. Two are still serving as pastors of the church. These were the first students for the ministry in a number of years. In 1945 Catechist W. A. Blair was chosen for an abbreviated two year study programme in the United States leading to ordination. Because of health and other problems he did not go. Blair continued to serve the church faithfully for many years until retirement. He is now serving in the legislature of Guyana.

Other students were sent abroad as ministerial proteges of the church, and a number have studied for the ministry on their own initiative. At the beginning of 1968 the Lutheran Church in Guyana had seven of its sons serving in its pastoral ministry. This is fewer than the number of former members of the Lutheran Church in Guyana who have been ordained and who are now serving in the United States in the gospel ministry or in secular occupations.

Partly as an effort to better equip ministerial candidates for service in Guyana itself, the Lutheran Church in Guyana in 1964 joined in the formation of the United Theological College of the West Indies in Jamaica. This is an interdenominational school formed around a core of several former denominational seminaries. Lutheran participation includes the duty and privilege of providing one member of the faculty. In 1965 the first three ministerial candidates of the Lutheran Church entered the student body, and the next year Professor Richard Bland became the first Lutheran professor at the school.

The school is prepared to accept students with A. B. degrees; but no previous university training is required for entrance, and none of the students studying there have such a degree. The Lutheran church will be carefully assessing over the next few years the results of this new programme of theological education. Up to 1964 all ministerial

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[11]Minutes no. 96, Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana, August 1-2, 1951.

candidates of the Lutheran Church in British Guiana were trained in seminaries in the United States and Canada after receiving the A. B. degree. In 1968 Samuel Seeram was the first to complete his work at the new seminary and return for ordination.

**H — Schools**

In recent years increasing subsidy has gone into Lutheran schools. Until the time of Pastor Mittelholzer, there seems to have been basically one schoolteacher in the employ of the Lutheran Church paid from the Berbice Lutheran Fund. After the end of slavery, the government aided churches were subsidized for educational as well as religious activities. Within a few years, a system of dual control, church and state, was instituted. With modifications, this dual control still is in effect today. It was probably during the time of Pastor Mittelholzer that the Lutheran church began to participate in the dual control system, receiving government grants for education. In 1939 the Lutheran church had four primary schools with 122 pupils. This was roughly the same that Pastor Mittelholzer tried to maintain, although when White arrived, he found only one school functioning. By 1961 the church had 19 primary schools and one secondary school, with total enrollment of 5,147. There were no additions to the number of schools of the church that year and have not been since, because of an announced change in government policy. The government is no longer prepared to give aid to new denominational schools. However, the government still pays teachers salaries and certain other expenses in the dual control primary schools previously operating.

A secondary school, the Modern Educational Institute, in Georgetown, was purchased by the Lutheran Church in 1944. About the same time the church discontinued its efforts to operate a secondary school in New Amsterdam. A few months later, the Upper Corentyne High Shool (later, Skeldon Lutheran High School) was opened. The school in Georgetown was discontinued in 1948, but a congregation organized at the site, Calvary, has become one of the strongest congregations of the church. The school on the Corentyne is still thriving. When it was opened, there was no other secondary school nearer than forty-seven miles away. Now, however there is a recently opened government secondary school less than a mile away, and the basis of need on which the Lutheran church opened the school is no longer present. The Lutheran secondary school is substantially government aided, but with somewhat less aid and less government control than in the primary system.

In a time of rapid population increase, the Lutheran church has performed much needed services in the communities in which it initiated or maintained schools. However, in so doing, the church has participated in a system with inherent weaknesses. The Lutheran church and other churches have been interested in securing teachers who would assist with the work of the church. Teaching has been one of the

major occupations open to young people successful at the top level of schooling available in their communities. Therefore a large number of young people have become teachers in the church schools without having any concern for the programme or beliefs of the church. Often the churches have felt deceived by the teachers. Often the teachers have felt vocationally compromised by the churches.

Increasingly in recent years the Lutheran church has raised the question of its proper role in general education in the country. This question is at present being studied by a committee of the church, with Harlow Bowen, principal of the Skeldon Lutheran High School serving as chairman.

## I — Amerindian Developments

Through its period of rapid church growth, the Lutheran church expanded its Amerindian work numerically, but not significantly geographically. Because the congregations are racially mixed, it is not possible to give statistics, but it is evident that the number of Amerindian communing members and the number of congregations among them has more than doubled since 1938. It is also true that, in this phase of its work, the church has scarcely gone beyond the geographical limits reached by Pastor Mittelholzer. Almost all its congregations that reach Amerindians are on the Berbice River; all are nearer than the farthest point served by him.

In all of its years of Amerindian work the Lutheran church has not trained one Amerindian pastor, or catechist, or lay-reader. In other words it has not developed even one paid or voluntary evangelistic worker. All work has been in English.

The story seems much the same in the experience of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, the churches that have succeeded in winning the vast majority of the Amerindian people. Their geographical expansion was basically complete forty-five years ago. Their mission stations are manned by expatriate missionaries, in English.

Although virtually all of the Amerindians of the country have been reached by the various Christian denominations, there is one area in which there is a notable exception. Near Mt. Roraima there is a syncretistic movement called the Hallelujah cult. It was founded by Amerindians who felt that the white man was withholding Christianity from them.[12]

Also working with the Amerindians are other groups such as the Seventh Day Adventists and Unevangelized Fields Mission. The latter group, operating in the vicinity of the source of the Essequibo near the Brazilian border, has an approach deserving of close study. This work dates only from 1948, but already all the preaching and most of the teaching has been turned over to the Amerindians. The Wai-Wai tribe of Indians there have become such evangelists that many of the

[12]Smith, p. 119.

converts made on their trips have returned with them to join the community. Thus their nomadic habits are an aid in evangelism. There has been sufficient immigration from Brazil to this community to elicit protests from the Brazilian government. The community recently numbered 350 with 125 children under twelve, only 34 of them born to people who had lived on the Essequibo when the missionaries arrived.[13]

The original plan of the missionaries had been to open a school for Amerindian boys. However, they found that they could not hold the boys, so they concentrated on reaching the men. They made considerable efforts to adapt to the life of the Amerindians. Their houses are similar to those of the Amerindians. The missionary wives gave up using white flour in favour of cassava. All learned the language of the people and various parts of the Scriptures have been translated into the Wai-Wai tongue. The Wai-Wais have in turn tried to adapt to the customs of those they seek to convert. In approaching the Waicas they cut their hair short to be like them. They present the basic Gospel message of God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.[14]

### J — Reflections on the Past

As we come near the close of the historical period covered, it seems good to reflect on what has passed into view.

We have seen an exclusively European colonial Lutheran church gradually receive Colored persons as second class members, resist firmly the evangelization of the slaves until emancipation was announced by the government, reach out to Amerindians in a limited way and quite late, and then reach out to East Indians in a fuller way even later. In the meantime the church, in a way that it did not plan, also received members of the other two ethnic groups in the land. Now in an amazing about face that can only be described as having come through the Grace of God, the Lutheran Church in Guyana, in a land of six peoples who are often sharply divided, welcomes all people.

We have seen a Dutch language church in a Dutch colony almost perish as the colony made the transition to English rule and the English language, then revive as an English language church.

We have seen a small, inward-looking congregation of Lutherans, working diligently for self-preservation, almost die out, then, as the church was revived, enthusiastically reach out to share the Gospel and become a number of organized congregations, rapidly growing, ever entering new areas to share the message of salvation.

We have seen a self-supporting church gradually become heavily endowed, then become a recipient of subsidy which grew until, in great contrast with its beginnings, the church ended up heavily subsidized.

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[13]Homer E. Dowdy, **Christ's Witchdoctor** (New York, Evanston, London : 1963), p. 218, **et passim.**

[14]**Ibid.**, p. 227, **et passim.**

# CHAPTER VII

# THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA (1966 —)

## MAYBE

Laura Ting-A-Kee

It may be
That when all my youth has passed
Into the far flung years of time,
I will laugh
To think that once I dreamed of creating a braver world,
Of changing these sightless tenements and all this
Sordidness,
Of bettering this hand-to-mouth existence
And imparting a little colour to so much
Colourlessness.

It may be
That when enthusiasm has passed
Into the grave of what might have been,
I will laugh
To think that such a nonentity as I
Had evolved gigantic plans for humanity —
But not now,
Not yet in this flesh of youth when each new dawn
Tiptoes in — aquiver with expectancy,
Brimming with hope.

The parallel developments in church and state continue as both the Lutheran church and the nation of Guyana achieve constitutional independence in 1966. Again the question arises whether there might be some parallel in British government and North American church policy-making. It may be that among other things the administration of such foreign subordinate institutions is not as palatable in our changing world as it once was.

Be that as it may, the time has come. And it may be that when enthusiasm has passed it will seem laughable to have hoped great hopes and dreamed great dreams. But not now.

## A — A New Church Constitution

In February of 1966 the Lutheran Church in Guyana was formed by the adoption of a new constitution. The Board-controlled Administrative Council was eliminated and its responsibilities returned to the elected executive. Provisions were adopted safeguarding the executive against missionary dominance, but insuring their presence in its membership.

Since the institution of the Administrative Committee, later named the Administrative Council, the major initiative for a new constitution and the return of the decision making process to the elected officers of the church had come from the Board. Part of the reason for this may be found in the high level of dependence upon the Board that is not affected by constitutional changes. Constitutionally, the Lutheran Church in Guyana is now independent of the control of the Board of World Missions of the Lutheran Church in America. However, as the church is still highly subsidized, the Board still maintains a high degree of control over policy and activity through the regulation of subsidy.

In this first year of the Lutheran Church in Guyana, Ebenezer congregation became the first of the sixteen parishes of the church to achieve full self-support in all parish expenses in the system of budgeting in use. Thus Ebenezer enters this new era significantly expressing the primacy which it has maintained throughout the history of the church. Ebenezer has always been the largest of the congregations. She has provided seven of the sixteen national pastors who have served the church. She has given the church all of its first four presidents: Patrick A. Magalee (1943-1949), Aubrey Roy Bowen (1949-1966), Winston S. Bone (1966), and Victor R. Munro (1966-1968), James B. Dookram (1968 — ) being the first president from another congregation.

In 1964 Ebenezer had dedicated a majestic new church building. This seems to be only the third church building in the long history of the congregation, the building before it having been in use for more than 150 years. But even the debt involved in the congregation's share of the expenses of the new church did not prevent Ebenezer from crossing a major threshold of self-support.

Also in 1966, the Lutheran Old Folks' Home was dedicated in New Amsterdam. This is the first institution of the church in more than 100 years to be operated on the basis of local offerings without subsidy.

The Mittelholzer Memorial Library, memorializing the Rev. John Robert Mittelholzer, first Guianese pastor of the church, was dedicated in the same year in New Amsterdam. Participants in the ceremony included his granddaughter, Miss Lucille Mittelholzer.

The church rejoiced with Pastor Aubrey Roy Bowen in 1967 as he received the Doctor of Divinity degree from his alma mater, Wittenberg University. Pastor Bowen served the Lutheran Church in Guyana as

its president for 17 of the 25 years of the office. Twice he has represented his church at Lutheran World Federation conventions. He has served as a pastor of the church for 32 years to date, second in service only to the 35 years of Pastor Mittelholzer.

In 1968 special celebrations were held for the 225th Anniversary of Ebenezer Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in Guyana. Distinguished guests participating in the celebrations included Sir David Rose, Governor-General of Guyana; the Most Reverend Alan John Knight, Anglican Archbishop of the West Indies; and Dr. Robert J. Marshall, newly elected President of the Lutheran Church in America.

## B — A New Nation

In the unusual parallel development in the life of the Lutheran church and the life of the nation, the basic question of constitutional independence was being simultaneously considered for both the church and the colony. And, independence came to both in the same year.

Conferences for the adoption of a constitution for British Guiana's independence began in London in 1960. The Guianese participants came to an impasse over the question of the system for the pre-independence elections. However, they did agree to participate in an elections system to be devised by the British government. So there was introduced a system of proportional representation, with seats in the legislature awarded according to the percentage of votes cast for each party.

Elections under this system late in 1964 were contested by the People's Progressive Party of Dr. Cheddi Jagan, which had won every election since its formation in 1950; the People's National Congress of Mr. Forbes Burnham, formed around a nucleus of former members of the PPP; and the United Force of Mr. Peter D'Aguiar. Only about 2% of the national vote was required for a party to win one seat in the legislature, so there were also a number of small new parties formed to participate in the election, hoping to win a seat or two, or more.

The PPP drew approximately 47% of the vote, and would surely have controlled the legislature if the election had been under the previous constituency system. The PNC drew about 40% of the vote, and the UF drew about 12%. All other parties combined drew less than 2% of the vote, not enough for one seat even if they had pooled their vote. The voting seems to have been almost exclusively along racial lines, with the Indo-Guianese voting for the PPP, the Afro-Guianese voting for the PNC, and the Amerindians, Chinese, Portuguese, and other Europeans voting for the UF. The Muslims, comprising about 10% of the population failed to support a Muslim party organized for the election. The ethnically oriented voters had apparently seen this and other small party efforts as potentially a divisive weakening of their position. The British had set up a system designed to encourage the multiplicity of political parties to counter the ethno-political polarization. This possible multiplicity of parties was rejected so completely

by the voters in the first election that there was little encouragement for any but the three parties in the legislature to continue in existence.

The PPP, which had only reluctantly participated in the new electoral system, denounced the election as a rigged system designed to oust them from office. For a time they refused to sit in the legislature. In the meantime, the UF, which held the balance of power, joined with the PNC in forming a coalition government with Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham as Prime Minister. The PPP considers this an alliance for convenience of a purportedly socialistic party with the forces of reactionary conservatism. A party publication at the time stated, "Full powers have now been transferred to the puppets of the imperialists by a rigged constitutional arrangement."[1]

Prime Minister Burnham negotiated for independence to come on February 23, 1966. The British thought that to be too early for them to complete necessary arrangements. Independence arrived May 26, 1966; but at the time it was announced that after the first anniversary independence is to be celebrated February 23, commemorating the great slave revolt of 1763 when independence was almost won by the people.

Now that independence has been made a reality, the champions of the people's welfare are free to work in progressive nation building. Or, opportunistic self-seekers are exploiting the people. It depends on whether you hear the government or the opposition.

Guyana has taken its place in the family of nations of the world as a member of the British Commonwealth and a member of the United Nations. Both government and opposition claim neutralism to be an essential element of Guyanese foreign policy. However, neutralism can be the label for widely varying positions.

Guyana's viability in the world community is probably at present most seriously threatened on the economic level. None of the developments of the past 150 odd years have dethroned "king sugar." With the Guyanese economy so dependent on one crop, preference prices for sugar considerably above the world market paid by Guyana's major customer, Britain, as well as by the United States, take on alarming significance. Even with these foreign price supports for the mainstay of the economy, the nation still requires a small amount of direct subsidy for its operating budget. Its development program is almost completely dependent on loans, grants, and overseas investments. Income taxes of Guyanese individuals and businesses are collectively at too low a level to be a major source of government income. Customs duties provide the principal source of government revenues. Any far reaching efforts to restructure the local financial pattern so as to mobilize the country's resources for progress always seem to hit one seg-

[1] The Struggles of the PPP for Guyana's Independence, with Foreword by Cheddi Jagan. Georgetown: The New Guiana Company, 1966, p. 40.

In December, 1968, the PNC was given an overall majority in an election which both the PPP and the UF denounced as rigged. The government hailed its victory as having come from inroads into the ethnic voting blocks which had previously supported the other parties.

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE (UNITED) LUTHERAN CHURCH VISITS THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Dr. Franklin Clark Fry and Pastor Bowen, 1960**

Dr. Robert Marshall And Pastor Dookram
1968

ment of the population harder than the rest, and therefore perish in the political, racial, and economic division and animosities which constantly beset the land. So, unemployment and underemployment currently stand at high levels in a rapidly rising population.

The operations of sugar and bauxite, the two major exports, are controlled by British and North American companies. The only other major export, rice, is purchased and sold abroad by the local government. In 1966 the government reduced prices paid to farmers for rice, but still sold at a loss. Over the past fourteen years about 15 investigations and reports have been made on the country's rice industry,[2] the only major export industry in local hands. These reports are given widely varying interpretations according to presuppositions and affiliations involved in the political, economic, and racial divisions that beset the land. This illustrates the fact that it is extremely difficult in Guyana to deal with any of the country's basic problems without becoming hopelessly entangled in racial, political, or economic divisions, animosities, and misunderstandings.

Guyana is a nation with many problems, but also with many hopes and dreams. As long as the internal divisions remain so intense, the nation of Guyana will be in danger of being relegated to the role of a pawn on the international chess board. However, if there were to develop a Guyanese sense of unity in a common destiny as strong as that which now exists within the two major races, the way might be cleared for unprecedented progress in nation-building.

### C — The Role of the Church in the Society

Central in the role of the church in society is the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel. In doing so, the church must be a community which shares, within its membership and also throughout the community, the love of God whose great gifts are revealed in and through the Gospel. This means that the church must make conscious attempts to work for the betterment of the social order. It also means that the church must consider how it unwittingly affects society through its internal life.

A negative example of how the church may affect society unwittingly can be given in relation to scholarships. In the granting of scholarships the church may be to some degree successful in providing itself with trained leaders. However, its effect on society at this point may be to encourage that type of social and economic striving in which the individual seeks to rise above his peers in a spirit of self-interest without much compassion. In so doing the church would be negating its own message by fostering that type of pride from which the Gospel redeems us. Perhaps the church could teach more effectively by precept and by example our Lord's admonition: he who would be first among you must be as one who serves.

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[2]Guyana Year Book 1967. (Georgetown: Guyana Graphic Limited), 1967, p. 227.

A positive example of how the church may affect society unwittingly can be given in connection with race relations. In a land in which racial divisions and tensions permeate virtually all the structures of society, the Lutheran church is almost unique in its racial make-up. Except for the Lutheran church, there is no church or religious group and scarcely any social institution that does not evidence a considerable degree of racial exclusiveness, imbalance, or disharmony. The Lutheran church is far from ideal in this respect; but it has reached all of the six peoples of the land, its life is comparatively free from racial disharmony, and its racial balance reflects that of the population. It would seem that the Gospel of God's reconciling love has brought the Lutheran Church into this position of racial inclusiveness somewhat unwittingly. Perhaps now the church can make conscious efforts toward better race relationships in the society.

In thinking of what the church has done in consciously attempting social improvement, let us consider schools and co-operatives. Perhaps the church has not given enough consideration to whether it is building and maintaining schools for the benefit of the church, or for the benefit of the community, or some combination of the two. It is hoped that the committee now studying the place of the church in education will lead the church to better answers. (See above, Chapter VI, page 105.)

The church has sponsored cooperatives only on the Berbice River. Perhaps the church as an institution, or individuals within it, could give considerably more attention to the possibilities of benefitting society through such endeavors as cooperatives, credit unions, labor unions, and Alcoholics Anonymous chapters where such are needed. In these attempts it would seem desirable that the church seek to function as a leaven in society, and avoid functioning as a dispenser of patronage. This would mean, among other things, lack of undue interest in having the church publicly credited with such moves, and cooperation in establishing community, rather than parochial approaches.

An area where the ineffectiveness of the church has prevented desirable social effects is that of marriage. The church has probably been too concerned about holding up a norm of a legalized monogamous union as a basis for discipline. Both the symbolism and the discipline have been ineffective. Some way needs to be found to bridge the gap between the ideal of the church and the practice of its members. Perhaps a better understanding of the motivations behind the unions outside this norm would lead to new insights in dealing the people whose marital practices are not in harmony with the church's view of what is right. Although the church cannot condone immorality, the question is whether it is worthwhile to denounce immorality ineffectively and to discipline constantly with such disappointing results.

Finally, in the church's role in society, it must be recognized that, insofar as the church is a part of the existing social order, there will be temptations to be defensive, conservative, and possibly even

reactionary. The church as an institution, as well as its members, must consider carefully the positions to be taken in relation to gradual or radical changes in the social and economic structures, giving support where appropriate. Is it not true that God will preserve His Church and that the proper role of a church as an institution in society is not in self-preservation but in service?

## D — The Current Religious Scene

There are three major religions in Guyana. Christians make up almost 60% of the population, Hindus more than 30%, and Muslims about 8%. (Recent census figures are given in Appendix VII). The East Indians, the fastest growing ethnic group, were in 1946 approximately 72% Hindu, 17% Muslim, and 10% Christian. The comparable figures for 1960 are 70% Hindu, 18% Muslim, and 11% Christian. Thus we have the anomalous situation in which Hindus have become a smaller portion of their ethnic group, while at the same time they have become a larger portion of the population as a whole. A new religious group in Guyanese society, which has flashed upon the scene quite dramatically in the past few months is the Black Muslims. It is too early to assess to what extent this will become an organized movement in the land, but there are increasing numbers of Black Muslim missionaries from the United States operating in Guyana. Lutherans, in spite of their rapid growth in recent years, amount to only about 2% of the population.

The Christian Churches are organized basically on the patterns set by the Mission Societies and overseas Churches which organized them. The majority of the Hindus are orthodox, or Sanatanists; but a growing number are attracted by ideas of reform, mainly Arya Samaj. Orthodox Hinduism in Guyana, the Sanatan Dharm Maha Sabha, is based on a Vaishnavite sect of upper-class Hindus in India.[3] Caste was largely lost on the ships and in the fields when the Indians were brought over as indentured laborers.[4] Even to the extent that it is retained, caste consciousness is based on criteria adopted in Guiana such as skin shade and wealth. Caste carries no connotations of ritual purity or pollution.[5] Most sects or cults have been assimilated or consolidated into the Sanatanist form of Hinduism. There are exceptions, such as the Siunarine, or Madrassi form of Hinduism, which is considered ultra-conservative, maintaining such practices as animal sacrifice. But these groups are losing ground.[6]

The majority of the Muslims are of the orthodox, or Sunni persuasion, organized as the United Sad'r Islamic Anjuman. A growing num-

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[3]Smith, p. 120ff.
[4]Chandra Jayawardena, Conflict and Solidarity in a Guianese Plantation (London, 1963), p. 18f.
Daly, p. 273f.
[5]Jayawardena, p. 19.
[6]See Smith, p. 122.

ber of Muslims, however, have adopted the reform movement, Ahmadiyya.[7]

In chapters I-VI we have mentioned the presence of Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist, and Moravian denominations of the Christian Church. In recent years the following groups have also come: Seventh Day Adventists, Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, Christian Brethren, AME Church, AME Zion Church, Assemblies of God, Pilgrim Holiness, Church of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Scientists.

The Lutheran Church in recent years has joined with other denominations on the national level in the Christian Social Council, the Council of Evangelical Churches, and the Committee on Joint Christian Action. On the area level the Lutheran Church cooperates in the various activities of Economics, a council of churches in the Southern Caribbean.

Since early colonial days, the Christian Church in one form or another was favored by the government. There are still residual ways in which various denominations of the Christian Church are in a favored position, but since independence all religions are officially on equal footing. It is now common to hear Hindu, Christian, and Muslim prayers following one after the other at civic functions.

This means that the Lutheran Church in Guyana is operating in an atmosphere of official religious freedom, which in actual practice permits a wide latitude for maneuverability not only for the various denominations and sects of the Christian faith but also for the other faiths. Everyone is free to practice his religion, everyone is free to change his religion, and everyone is free to seek converts to his faith. Of course it would go without saying that this picture of official freedom is quite different from the picture one would get when taking into account such factors as social, cultural, and family pressures. But the point is that it does not seem that the official stance of freedom for all faiths is significantly affected by these pressures.

The basic Hindu approach in Guyana is grounded in the premises that the only way to become a Hindu is to be born one and that it is disloyal for a Hindu to change his religion. The basic Muslim approach in Guyana is based in theory on the premises that everyone is born a Muslim and the duty of true believers is to encourage everyone in the practice of the faith. However, to this time, allegiance is given to Islam in Guyana almost entirely by descendants of Muslim immigrants from India.

The basic interrelationships among the religions of Guyana at present seem to involve increasing cooperation in matters of mutual concern and increasing defensiveness in relation to proselytizing.

Within the Christian scene the general relationships are in a considerable state of flux. The conservative evangelicals on the one hand and the traditionally more aloof Roman Catholics and Anglicans on

[7]For information on this movement see "Ahmadiyya," in Vol. I, p. 301ff. of The Encyclopedia of Islam (Leiden, 1960).

the other hand are now reaching out for wider contacts. The Lutheran church finds itself in the middle and participates in organizations and projects initiated from both sides. There is considerable pressure, however, in each grouping, to exclude the other end of the spectrum. In cases in which all find themselves together in one grouping the atmosphere is seldom relaxed. Perhaps the establishment of the Guyana Council of Churches early in 1968 will lend to greater harmony as well as providing a much more active cooperative life. Member churches in the Council are the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Congregational, Guyana Presbyterian, Presbytery of Guyana, Lutheran, Moravian, Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, and Church of God.

# EPILOGUE

As our next to last chapter ended with reflections on the past, it seems appropriate that after the last chapter we have reflections on the present and future.

First, it might be well to say that no attempt will be made to assess all phases of the church's life. Rather, we shall attempt to assess the situation in the context of the threads traced through the history with such future projections as seem appropriate in that context.

Such important aspects of the life of the church as Christian education, Sunday School, Vacation Church School, Luther League, Woman's League, and even the worship life of the church have scarcely been mentioned in this book. Further, it is likely that none of these aspects of church life can be traced very much beyond the memory of persons now living. It would be well if persons directly connected with these facets of church life were to prepare at least historical sketches including such facts as are still available relating to their origin and development.

Second, we must note the Study Conference which was held in August of 1967 as a cooperative endeavor of the Lutheran Church in Guyana and the Board of World Missions of the Lutheran Church in America. The Board has been holding these conferences in churches with which it is related around the world for the purpose of making an assessment of the present state of each church and pointing up questions which should be the church's concern for the immediate future. We have already mentioned two of the committees which are now working in the follow-up of the conference, the committees on indigenization and education, although we did not mention the background of their appointment. Other committees following up the findings of the conference include one to study the financial potential of the church together with a proposed program for stewardship education and one to study the ministry of the church to the people in the Georgetown area.

It is probably too early to place this study conference in historical perspective. On the other hand, the success of the conference will be judged largely from the results following what the conference has initiated. Some minor future projections have already been made in connection with the unfolding of the history; and perhaps there is a place here for projections, closely related to the concerns of the study conference, which would seem to involve the church's breaking out of its present mold. These projections are given as possibilities which may be worthy of serious consideration.

## A — Indigenization and the Church

There is considerable question to what extent this Lutheran church was ever indigenous. In worship forms and in organizational life, the church began with a transplanted Dutch model and now is set in a North American Lutheran mold. However, the possibility of Guyanization raises many difficult questions. Guyana is probably more a land with many sets of distinctive traditions than a land of common traditions, although its people have much in common in what they have experienced. Therefore, efforts toward Guyanization on anything more than a superficial level run the risk of attracting certain sections of the Guyanese people and alienating others. One possible answer is to attempt to introduce elements from various antecedent traditions in a proper balance. Another answer is to attempt to anticipate, and perhaps even help to create, new modes which will appeal to all sections of the people.

The Lutheran Church can scarcely even glance toward the Reformation without being forced to recognize the positive values in indigenization of worship and church organization. Therefore, is seems that the proper question for the Lutheran Chruch in Guyana is not whether further indigenization is to be considered, but how it might be effected to the best advantage of the people of the church and the society.

## B — Finances and Stewardship

It has been widely, and wisely, said that stewardship involves much more than finances. It is also true that in a money economy finances are an important concern of stewardship.

It is questionable whether a church that is not in control of its finances has a free hand in other basic matters of stewardship. For example, imagine that a church, heavily subsidized by a foreign board, decides to send three catechists to open work in new geographical areas. The church might make the appropriate surveys, choose the areas, then request the board for funds to initiate the work. The request might arrive too late for the board's June meeting, and six months might pass before an answer would be received. The answer might be that funds are not available at the present, but after two years funds will be provided for one new area.

On the other hand, a church that is financially independent will be able to make its own decisions in many other basic matters of stewardship and evangelism.

In many ways the activity of the Lutheran Church in Guyana is severely restricted by dependence on subsidy. Under the present system, the church cannot do such things as build a building, train a pastor or other worker, or enter a new geographical area without first asking the Board for subsidy and waiting to hear whether the subsidy is to be granted.

The Lutheran Church in Guyana, as presently structured, does not seem to have financial independence in its foreseeable future.

Many stewardship efforts in recent years have concentrated on leading the way to escape this dependence. There has been considerable success in increasing offerings, but in most cases the budgets have increased just as fast or faster. Ebenezer parish his reached an important level of self-support. Two or three other parishes may soon reach self-support without any radical changes in the system. What about the other dozen parishes? Some are losing ground in the matter or self-support. It would seem that self-support can be achieved only if something such as one of the following should happen:

(1) Unforeseen economic progress in Guyana. This would increase the possibilities of self-support, but would not automatically bring it to pass.

(2) Unprecedented numerical growth in the present congregations without significant increase in expenditures. With a number of small congregations quite close together, some in sparsely populated areas, some in strongholds of the non-Christian Religions, it seems that the realistic possibilities for rapid sustained numerical growth are limited in the present congregations.

(3) An increase in offerings to a percentage of income far beyond that considered normal in Lutheran congregations in the United States. To highlight the problem, let us imagine a parish with five congregations and a total of 200 communing members from seventy households with average incomes of $1,500, supporting one pastor, two catechists, and one parish worker in a budget of $12,000. This would not be atypical for the Lutheran Church in Guyana. Now note well: even if all the members give one-tenth of their income in offering to the parish budget, the budget still will not be met.

(4) A restructuring of the financial base, with a sizable reduction in expenditures for salaries and property. (Salaries and property together comprise about two-thirds of all expenditures.) One thing that tends to make this approach unpalatable is that its use by certain other Christian denominations in Guyana has brought about a period called a time of consolidation, but which looked more like a period of reduction of vitality in the life of the church. (For example: see above, Chapter V, page 86.)

(5) Another possibility which seems comparatively painless and quite worthy of consideration would be to freeze the budget at approximately the present level while the church grows. Whether it would be possible for the church to grow without budget escalation will be considered in the next section.

## C — Personnel and Evangelism

The 1940's were a time of rapid church growth in the history of the Lutheran Church in Guyana. Can such growth happen again? It might be that with large additional amounts of subsidy brought in, many more workers trained and put on salary, and many more buildings erected, such growth might be brought about once more, but questions arise at least for a church as small in relation to the unevangelized receptive population as is the Lutheran church. Where is the church to get ten times its present level of subsidy? Would such a subsidy increase be a good thing for the church?

It seems that a way of regaining rapid church growth while at the same time moving toward self-support would be well worth consideration.

The Lutheran Church in Guyana has now in its employ a group of hard-working and dedicated catechists whose morale is low, perhaps partly because they seem to be caught up in a catechist system that is being phased out. Why not assign to them a new, or restored, role: pioneer evangelism?

Who can say that such areas as Wismar and the Essequibo Islands are not in need of the witness which the Lutheran Church has to give? If funds and workers were available, the church would surely be considering entering new areas. A thoughtful and prayerful study, perhaps in co-operation with other Christian and secular resource persons, could be made of where the Lutheran church is really needed. The church could act on its sensitivity to those who are receptive to the Gospel at this time.

If such growth could take place without new buildings and without a measureably increased salaried staff, then self-support should be realistically within reach.

But how can catechists be released from their present responsibilities? Who would preach the sermons? Who would lead the worship services? Who would supervise the Sunday Schools and the Luther Leagues? Who would do the visitation?

Perhaps a rapid transition in the established congregations from dependence on paid workers to a fuller encouragement and a fuller training of volunteer workers is an answer. The catechists, on this basis, would fulfill these responsibilities in present congregations and in new areas, only until such time as volunteer workers are prepared to take over. Catechists would then be continually released for evangelistic outreach in new geographical areas.

What, then, about buildings? Shall the church refuse to preach the gospel in a new community until it has money to buy land and build a building? What about the possibility of the house chapel as the growing edge of the church? Can the congregation not find a home among the homes of those who are responding to the Gospel message?

In this method of church extension the catechist or pastor could move into a carefully selected new community, find temporary quarters, work there for a few months or a few years. Then, as he moves on, ideally he would leave behind a vital Christian community which owns no property, pays no resident workers, and requires no subsidy. But it would be a self-sustaining congregation which can even carry on its own programme of evangelistic outreach. In some cases such a congregation would develop to the point of requiring the services of a full-time paid worker. Realistically, in other situations, the catechist or pastor would move on, leaving behind a situation in which things did not seem to get moving. The people did not respond, and the congregation was not formed. Perhaps a family was left in the care of another Christian denomination. In either case, the main funds used were those released by the giving up of salaried workers and their housing by established congregations, and the church has remained free to carry the Gospel to new frontiers.[1]

Many problems would be involved. Problems such as pastoral supervision would have to be considered. But the basic question is whether a way can be found for the church to extend its ministry and be a true steward of the Gospel without constantly looking over its shoulder to see what subsidy is available.

Finally, what is the point in being concerned about church growth? Not that the church may become bigger. A bigger church is not necessarily a better one. What is the point of church growth? Not self-support. Self-support is a means to an end. What is the point? The point is that dedicated people in the church realize what a great treasure they have in the Gospel. They want to find the most effective way to share with other people the saving love of God, which He has revealed so graciously to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[1]For one well articulated presentation of more radical proposals in this direction, see the works of Roland Allen such as: **The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church** (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Wm. B. Herdmans, 1962).

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is designed, hopefully, as a helpful guide to source materials on the history of the Lutheran Church in Guyana.

An extensive bibliography on the history of the nation of Guyana and its antecedents can be found in Smith. An extensive bibliography on the culture of the nation can be found in Jayawardena. McDonald carries a lengthy bibliography covering the history of the nation and of its churches. However, lest anyone else waste time looking for the publication by W. T. Benze listed in McDonald's bibliography, suffice it to say that it is apparently nonexistent. A magazine article on the Lutheran Church in British Guiana authored by Mrs. W. T. Benze, extracted, bound, and placed on file in the library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, seems likely to be the source of his listing.

Certain of the older and less accessible works cited may be found as follows: Kunkle's manuscript in the custody of the Board of World Missions of the Lutheran Church in America; the works cited by Brett, Case, Crokall, Dowdy, Josa, Rain, and McDonald, together with other works on the Christian churches in Guyana, in the Missionary Research Library, New York City; the works by Clementi, Cruickshank, Farar, and Wallbridge, together with many works on the early history of the country, in the library of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society, Georgetown; also many works on the general history of the country may be found in the Public Free Library, Georgetown.

Possibly all of the materials on the Lutheran Church in Guyana now in the archives of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia as well as the main body of older materials now in the archives of the Lutheran Church in Guyana were retained for many years by the government of British Guiana in connection with its oversight of the Berbice Lutheran Fund. Some of the materials retained by the government may have been released prior to 1948. However, it was after the fund was returned to the full custody of the Lutheran Church in 1948 that the government released its file on the fund. It was not until after the receipt of materials from this file that a place was established for the archives of the Lutheran Church in Guyana. It is fortunate that these materials were preserved, but it is regretted that they are not presently accompanied by more of the basic records of the church.

It would be unwieldy to attempt to list all the documents which were read in the archives of the Lutheran Church in Guyana and of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Specific documents found most useful are cited in the footnotes to the text of the paper.

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**ARCHIVES: LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA**

The materials are incomplete for every subject and every period up to 1943. There is a fair amount of materials for the period 1743-1752, a fuller amount for 1847-1913, and adequate coverage for the period 1943 to date. A list is being prepared of the materials in the archives and will be on file in the church office.

## ARCHIVES: LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PHILADELPHIA

The materals there on the Lutheran Church in Guyana are incomplete for every subject and every period. The heaviest concentration is in the period 1802-1846. There is extremely little material there which is dated before 1781 or after 1881. A partial list of the materials in the collection has been prepared and sent to the librarian.

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## APPENDIX I — Availability of Materials.

Attempts to articulate a history must be deeply affected by the availability of materials. In the case of the Lutheran Church in Guyana, a large body of materials was preserved by the local government in connection with litigation. Appeals for government intervention in the financial affairs of the church were made as early as 1813. There was some government control at that time. The establishment of the Berbice Lutheran Fund in the 1870's marked a more extensive government involvement which lasted until 1948.

Because of the nature of the materials preserved, it would be possible to write a comparatively complete history of the antecedents, origins, development, demise, and consequents of the Berbice Lutheran Fund. But in a general history of the Lutheran Church in Guyana, there are many gaps, many isolated facts and many invitations to suppositions. In order to try to present a more balance picture, it is necessary to omit much financial information.

One main source for suppositions concerning the early period of the Lutheran Church in Berbice is the available information concerning the Lutheran Consistory at Amsterdam and its relation with the Lutheran Church in the New Amsterdam which is now New York in "The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649—1772." This work is also of special interest for another reason. It is basically a collection of translations of documents in the Lutheran Church Archives at Amsterdam, Holland. The Introduction to the volume describes how problems of digging among uncatelogued records prevented access to these materials until 1937 when Mr. Simon Hart was appointed Archivist of the City Archives of Amsterdam, "His diligent search brought to light almost 400 pages of material for the years 1649 to 1772, comprising the correspondence between the colonial Lutheran leaders and the Amsterdam Consistory, together with the minutes of that body relating to its oversight of the churches in the colony. . . All the records are in Dutch except some 60 pages in German and a few pages in Latin and English."[1]

It seems certain that the same archives must contain a similar body of documents relating to the Lutheran Church in Berbice, at least from 1743 to about 1845. This body of materials, if made available, would undoubtedly fill many of the gaps and confirm or correct many of the suppositions of this paper concerning the early life of the Lutheran Church in Berbice.

No primary source materials were found from the archives of the East Pennsylvania Synod. Neither the librarians of the Lutheran seminaries at Philadelphia and Gettysburg nor the president of the present Eastern Pennsylvania Synod was able to tell where possible

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[1] "The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649-1772," p. 34.

primary sources relating to the church in British Guiana in the years 1889-1915 from the records of the East Pennsylvania Synod are located. There should be a file of relevant correspondence with accompanying documents in some repository.

The available materials give very scant information about the first 150 years of the church's life in such basic areas as: membership, Holy Communion and Baptismal practices, pastoral visitation practices, even worship.

## APPENDIX II — The White Swan.

The white swan, as a symbol for the Lutheran Church, was brought to Berbice by the early Dutch Lutherans and still is still widely used in the Lutheran Church in Guyana.

The traditional explanation for the use of this symbol points to the time of the martyrdom of John Hus (Johannes, or Jan, of Husinecz). It is said that on July 6, 1415 when Hus was burned at the stake he prophesied: "You may roast this goose, but in a hundred years a swan will arise whose voice you will not still." Then a hundred years later Martin Luther came preaching many of the same doctrines which led to the martyrdom of Hus, and his voice was not stilled.

Although there are undeniable elements of truth in this story, there are also strong doubts about the validity of such a quotation of Hus. One biographer of Hus, referring to the alleged quotation in a varying form, suggests that it "was not a prophecy spoken by him, but the invention of a later time."[1] He remarks that it occurs several times in Luther's works and may have been made up in part of Hus' and part of Jerome of Prague's words. He says that Jerome, a renowned disciple of Hus who was burned at the stake May 30, 1416, cited his condemnors to appears after 100 years, and in the presence of the most high God, the final judge, to make reply to him.[2]

Another biographer says that Hus "felt that others would rise up after him and carry on to completion the work which 'the poor Goose,' as he styled himself, had so nobly and so dauntlessly begun."[3]

Various biographers indicate that Hus sang a hymn or a portion of the liturgy at the time of his martyrdom. It seems likely that the particular quotation attributed to Hus in explanation of the symbol of the white swan dates from a period after his death.

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[1]David S. Schaff, **John Huss—His Life, Teachings and Death after Five Hundred Years** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 258.
[2]Ibid.
[3]A. H. Wratislaw, **John Hus** (London: S.P.C.K., 1882), p. 336.

## APPENDIX III

### Pastors and Missionaries of the Lutheran Church in Guyana.

| Pastors : | Service |
|---|---|
| Johan Henrik Faerkenius | 1752-1754 |
| Johann Friderich Matthaus Groschner | 1756-1760 |
| Salomon Fridericus Muller | 1761-1763 |
| Jan Anthony Glendtkamp | 1777-1779 |
| Rudolph Scheffer | 1818(?)-1822 |
| Johannes Vos | 1825-1829 |
| H. W. P. Junius | 1830-1841 |
| Alexander Riach (?) | 1842-1846 |
| Johan Sander (acting) | 1876-1878 |
| John Robert Mittelholzer (N) | 1878-1913 |
| Milton H. Stine | 1914 |
| Ralph J. White | 1916-1923 |
| Meade A. Rugh | 1920-1921 |
| Harlow E. Haas | 1923-1927 |
| Robert H. Daube | 1927-1935 |
| Paul M. Counts | 1930-1932 |
| W. Theodore Benze | 1935-1936 |
| Aubrey R. Bowen (N) | 1936- |
| Paul O. Machatzki | 1937-1940 |
| Patrick A. Magalee (N) | 1938-1954 |
| Howard R. Kunkle | 1940-1943 |
| E. F. Rohlfing | 1943-1948 |
| Luther W. Slifer | 1943-1945 |
| H. T. Cuthbert (W. Indies) | 1944 |
| Wallace J. Wolff | 1945-1949 |
| | 1952-1960 |
| Hector C. Magalee (N) | 1946-1964 |
| | 1966-1967 |
| Claire S. Hayner | 1946-1950 |
| Paul G. Hansen | 1948- |
| G. Gordon Parker | 1949-1957 |
| Wylock J. E. Scott | 1951-1954 |
| Eden Nicholas | 1953-1954 |
| E. Gene Vosseler | 1953-1955 |
| F. Leland Ingalls | 1954-1958 |
| Edward B. Meyer | 1955-1962 |
| Franklin D. Christhilf | 1956-1963 |
| William E. Cox | 1958-1961 |
| Arthur J. Henne | 1958-1965 |
| Donald R. Gebert | 1959-1963 |
| Barry C. Lang | 1959- |
| R. John Singh (N) | 1960-1963 |
| Paul T. Jagdhar (N) | 1961- |
| Winston S. Bone (N) | 1961-1966 |
| Clinton E. Chu (N) | 1961-1969 |
| Desmond Hamlet (N) | 1961-1963 |
| J. Brooks Moore | 1961-1962 |
| James B. Dookram (N) | 1962- |
| Richard Smith (N) | 1962-1965 |
| Victor R. Munroe (N) | 1962-1969 |
| Paul Beatty, Jr. | 1964- |
| Dennis N. Hahle | 1964- |
| Harrinarine Rajaballey (N) | 1965- |
| Donald Olson | 1966-1969 |
| Ronald Swanson | 1966-1969 |
| Geoffrey Tannassee (N) | 1966- |
| Samuel Seeram (N) | 1967- |
| Joseph Drepaul (N) | 1969 |
| David R. Udit (N) | 1969- |
| John Bollinger | 1969- |
| Daniel Bloomquist | 1969- |
| **Lay missionaries on assignments :** | |
| Elaine Wagner | 1947- |
| Dorothy Morter | 1947-1950 |
| Alice Anderson | 1950-1954 |
| Marianne Fague | 1954- |
| Ruth Zartman | 1954-1962 |
| Martha Petersen | 1957-1969 |
| Mary Frances Recher | 1960-1963 |
| Ruth Walker | 1964- |
| Thyra Mollberg | 1964-1967 |
| Dale Conrad | 1965-1968 |
| John Hult | 1967-1970 |
| Mrs. Elizabeth Schlenker | 1969- |

(N) National pastor. Undesignated: before 1900, from Amsterdam; after. from the United States and Canada.

Of 60 pastors, 12 served less than 2 years, 22 served 2-5 years, 8 served 6-10 years, 6 served more than 10 years, and 12 are still serving. In addition, Pastors Walter Krouse, 1943, and John Parkinson (N), 1957, arrived to take up assignments, but left without doing so.

## APPENDIX IV

**Membership Growth: Lutheran Church in Guyana.**

| Communicant Membership | | | No. of Cong. | Communicant Membership | | | No. of Cong. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ebenezer | | All Congregations | | Ebenezer | | All Congregations | |
| 1875 | 14 | 14 | 1 | 1931 | 198 | 362 | 6 |
| 1876 | 12 | 12 | 1 | 1932 | 240 | 414 | 6 |
| | | | | 1933 | 236 | 424 | 6 |
| 1878 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 1934 | 223 | 394 | 6 |
| | | | | 1935 | 220 | 338 | 6 |
| 1890 | ? | 195 | 5 | 1936 | 120 | 262 | 5 |
| 1891 | ? | 206 | 5 | 1937 | 142 | 304 | 5 |
| 1892 | ? | 257 | 6 | 1938 | 282 | 415 | 6 |
| 1893 | ? | 280 | 6 | 1939 | 333 | 560 | 7 |
| 1894 | ? | 282 | 5 | 1940 | 379 | 652 | 7 |
| 1895 | ? | 293 | 5 | 1941 | 367 | 691 | 10 |
| 1896 | 190 | 311 | 5 | 1942 | 387 | 804 | 12 |
| 1897 | 197 | 319 | 5 | 1943 | 429 | 1023 | 19 |
| 1898 | 195 | 319 | 5 | 1944 | 448 | 1226 | 24 |
| 1899 | 200 | 334 | 6 | 1945 | 446 | 1440 | 27 |
| 1900 | 200 | 334 | 6 | 1946 | 421 | 1615 | 29 |
| 1901 | 171 | 297 | 6 | 1947 | 412 | 1768 | 31 |
| 1902 | 171 | 279 | 5 | 1948 | 423 | 1638 | 33 |
| 1903 | 171 | 279 | 5 | 1949 | 400 | 1657 | 34 |
| 1904 | 171 | 279 | 5 | 1950 | 404 | 1774 | 35 |
| 1905 | 176 | 284 | 5 | 1951 | 346 | 1894 | 37 |
| 1906 | 176 | 291 | 5 | 1952 | 267 | 1792 | 40 |
| 1907 | 180 | 309 | 5 | 1953 | 327 | 2137 | 40 |
| 1908 | 190 | 343 | 5 | 1954 | 331 | 2146 | 44 |
| 1909 | 196 | 355 | 5 | 1955 | 335 | 2212 | 44 |
| 1910 | 196 | 355 | 5 | 1956 | 385 | 2343 | 44 |
| 1911 | 203 | 362 | 5 | 1957 | 472 | 2442 | 44 |
| 1912 | 205 | 378 | 5 | 1958 | 408 | 2549 | 45 |
| 1913 | 205 | 364 | 5 | 1959 | 401 | 2677 | 46 |
| | | | | 1960 | 446 | 2897 | 49 |
| 1917 | 125 | 362 | 5 | 1961 | 514 | 3213 | 49 |
| | | | | 1962 | 410 | 3140 | 50 |
| 1922 | ? | 280 | 4 | 1963 | 438 | 3079 | 52 |
| 1923 | ? | 256 | 4 | 1964 | 442 | 3025 | 52 |
| | | | | 1965 | 420 | 3145 | 52 |
| 1928 | 180 | 355 | 6 | 1966 | 392 | 3124 | 52 |
| 1929 | ? | 400 | 6 | 1967 | 424 | 3509 | 52 |
| 1930 | ? | 250 | 6 | 1968 | 406 | 3432 | 52 |

The list of congregations here and in Appendix V is somewhat distorted because of inconsistencies in determining what is a congregation. Before 1939 we have listed every station or preaching point of the church which had any communing membership as a congregation. This was the manner of reporting used from 1939 to 1947. After 1947 the designation "congregation" was reserved for points with fuller development.

Sources : 1875, 1876, 1878: the main body of the paper.
1890-1913: East Pennsylvania Synod Minutes.
1917-1965: Annual Reports, Board of Foreign Missions, General Synod (and United Lutheran Church in America); Convention Minutes, Lutheran Church in Guyana

# APPENDIX V.

## Church Growth, Lutheran Church in Guyana.

| | Communicant Membership | Congregations | Parishes | Sunday School | | Pastors | | Catechists | Receipts in Guyana Dollars | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Schools | Pupils | Foreign | National | | Church Offerings | Board Subsidy |
| 1931 | 362 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 567 | 1 | — | 4 | 831 | 6,942 |
| 1935 | 338 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 397 | 1 | — | 4 | 723 | 3,468 |
| 1938 | 415 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 448 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 901 | 6,097 |
| 1942 | 804 | 12 | 3 | 24 | 988 | 1 | 2 | | 3,111 | 16,259 |
| 1943 | 1023 | 19 | 6 | 27 | 1440 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 3,725 | 27,047 |
| 1945 | 1440 | (27) | 6 | 36 | 1938 | 3 | 2 | 16 | 4,872 | (58,115) |
| 1946 | (1615) | 29 | 6 | (55) | (3010) | 3 | 3 | 17 | 6,890 | 57,814 |
| 1949 | 1657 | 34 | 6 | 62 | 3267 | 3 | 3 | 19 | (13,977) | 71,342 |
| 1953 | 2137 | 40 | 10 | | | 4 | 3 | 26 | 15.015 | 123,184 |
| | | | | | | | | 30* | (29,999) | |
| 1957 | 2442 | 44 | 11 | 84 | 4782 | 3 | 2 | 29 | 20,469 | 176,349 |
| | | | | 87* | 5139* | 7* | | | | |
| 1961 | 3213* | 49 | 18* | 78 | 4642 | 5 | 7* | 27 | 43,250* | 191,942 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 239,170* |
| 1965 | 3145 | 52* | 16 | 74 | 3573 | 4 | 6 | 20 | 42,289 | 170,168 |

( ) Parenthesis indicates final year of a period of rapid increase.

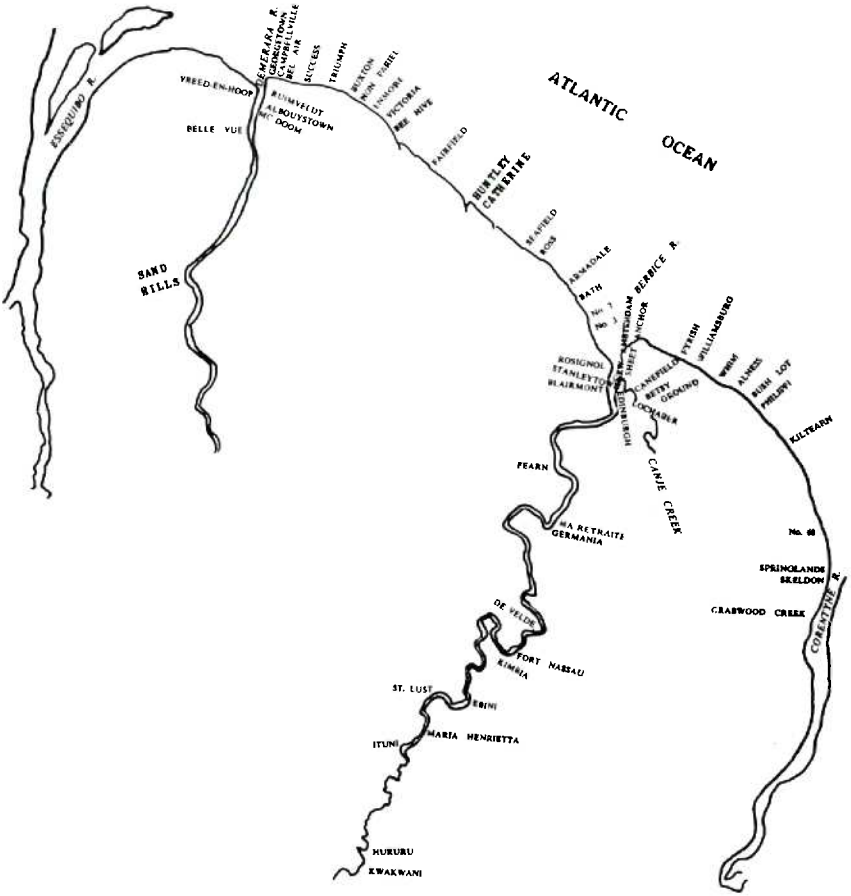
* Asterik indicates highest peak.

The financial figures listed above were acquired through a very tedious process. The varying systems of reporting made it necessary to regard the annually reported figures as misleading in indicating trends.

To arrive at figures for church offerings, it was often necessary to take total receipts, then subtract government grants and income from the Berbice Lutheran Fund. At times figures given for total church offerings included only offerings to the church-wide budget; in such cases offerings received and expended on the congregational and parish levels were added to give true figures for total offerings.

From 1931 into the 1940's the figures seem to indicate total Board subsidy and total local offerings. In the later years, the figures include basically operating expenses. Board subsidy in the later years for specials, such as buildings and land generally pushed subsidy more than 50% beyond listed figures. Local offerings, in the later years generally provided 10% or less for these specials.

Other problems were encountered, but the figures given do not seem to be in need of major corrections beyond those mentioned.




**Location of Congregations and Preaching Points of the Lutheran Church in Guyana 1969.**

## APPENDIX VII — POPULATION: BRITISH GUIANA

### BY RACE

| | 1762[a] | 1831 | 1891 | 1911 | 1921 | 1931 | 1946 | 1960 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East Indians | | | 105,--- | 126,517 | 124,938 | 130,540 | 163,343 | 267,840 |
| Negroes | 3,833 | 86,950 | 115,588 | 115,846 | 117,169 | 124,203 | 143,385 | 183,980 |
| Mixed .. | | 7,521[b] | 20,--- | 30,251 | 30,587 | 33,800 | 37,685 | 67,189 |
| Portuguese | | | 3,714 | 2,623 | 2,722 | 2,952 | 3,567 | 4,074 |
| Portuguese | | | 12,166 | 10,084 | 9,175 | 8,612 | 8,543 | |
| Other Europeans | 346 | 3,529 | 4,558 | 3,937 | 3,291 | 2,127 | 2,480 | 11,873 |
| Other Asians | | | | 243 | 659 | 325 | 285 | |
| All except Amerindians | 4,179 | 98,000 | 261,026 | 289,140 | 288,540 | 302,585 | 359,379 | 534,956 |
| Amerindians[c] | 244 | ——— | 7,463 | 6,901 | 9,105 | 8,348 | 16,322 | 25,450 |

[a]For Berbice only.

[b]Free colored and black.

[c]Figures for 1762 probably indicate those directly connected with the colony. Subsequent figures show more about census than about population development. The number for 1960 is considered near the actual number.

Sources : 1762, Daly, p. 72; 1831, Rain, p. 375; 191ff, Newman, p. 43. Figures for 1891ff. are from census returns.

### BY RELIGION

| Religious Body | Number | | Ratio in Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christian | 1946 | 1960 | 1946 | 1960 |
| Anglican .. .. .. | 85,329 | 109,561 | 23.2% | 19.6% |
| Roman Catholic .. .. | 43,594 | 83,741 | 11.8% | 14.9% |
| Presbyterian .. .. .. | 25,264 | 7,600[a] | 6.8% | 1.3% |
| Wesleyans and Congregationalists | 38,555 | 25,356[b] | 10.5% | 4.5% |
| Lutherans, Moravians, Seventh Day Adventists and others | 24,866[c] | 91,492[c] | 6.7% | 16.4% |
| Hindu .. .. .. | 118,095 | 187,403 | 32.0% | 33.4% |
| Muslim .. .. .. | 29,281 | 49,290 | 8.0% | 8.8% |
| Other non-Christian .. .. | 329 | 314 | | |
| Not stated and no religion .. | 3,568 | 5,573 | 1.0% | 1.0% |

These are census figures and should be considered religious preference statistics. Their accuracy even as preference statistics is open to question by such considerations as those which follow.

[a]Presbyterian adherence probably increased from 1946 to 1960. It is possible that persons giving their preference as "Scots Church" or "Canadian Mission", common derivative terms for the two Presbyterian bodies in the land, may not have been listed "Presbyterian" in the census of 1960.

[b]The 1960 figure listed here for Wesleyans and Congregationalists was simply labelled "Methodist" in the census report. However, the figure seems too large for Methodists alone, and too small for Methodists and Congregationalists.

[c]The large increase in this figure gives credence to points mentioned in "a" and "b"

Sources : 1946—Smith, p. 118ff. 1960—British Guiana Population Census 1960, Vol. II, Part A. Trinidad and Tobago, Central Statistics Office, 14 February 1964.

## APPENDIX VI.

### Communicant Membership of Largest Congregations

### Lutheran Church in Guyana.

| | Ebenezer New Amsterdam | St. Paul Berbice River | Epiphany Georgetown | Christ Seafield | Transfiguration Canje | St. John Williamsburg | Calvary Georgetown | Redeemer Campbellville | Emanuel Skeldon |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1950 | 404(1) | 83(3) | 96(2) | 79(4) | 73(5) | 67 | 37 | 22 | 43 |
| 1951 | 346 | 108 | 98 | 92 | 41 | 99 | 37 | 22 | 55 |
| 1952 | 267 | 103 | 108 | 95 | 32 | 131 | 44 | 28 | 25 |
| 1953 | 327 | 107 | 75 | 47 | 33 | 134 | 47 | 77 | 30 |
| 1954 | 331 | 100 | 83 | 52 | 47 | 75 | 65 | 81 | 41 |
| 1955 | 335 | 90 | 120 | 52 | 61 | 93 | 80 | 54 | 25 |
| 1956 | 385 | 103 | 108 | 54 | 54 | 90 | 88 | 45 | 20 |
| 1957 | 472 | 94 | 124 | 43 | 56 | 71 | 85 | 52 | 38 |
| 1958 | 408 | 90 | 146 | 65 | 63 | 83 | 101 | 70 | 41 |
| 1959 | 401 | 91 | 122 | 47 | 96 | 93 | 108 | 86 | 60 |
| 1960 | 446 | 85 | 136 | 37 | 73 | 110 | 160 | 64 | 53 |
| 1961 | 514 | 86 | 120 | 64 | 70 | 143 | 166 | 89 | 74 |
| 1962 | 410 | 86 | 108 | 67 | 59 | 147 | 146 | 121 | 72 |
| 1963 | 438 | 85 | 116 | 57 | 44 | 135 | 146 | 156 | 49 |
| 1964 | 442 | 76 | 87 | 50 | 39 | 130 | 151 | 163 | 120 |
| 1965 | 420 | 64 | 83 | 46 | 44 | 130 | 193 | 211 | 118 |
| 1966 | 392 | 54 | 90 | 85 | 45 | 134 | 240 | 234 | 121 |
| 1967 | 424 | 68 | 114 | 43 | 50 | 142 | 262 | 256 | 130 |
| 1968 | 406(1) | 60 | 108 | 45 | 50 | 130(4) | 274(2) | 241(3) | 119(5) |
| Date Organized | 1743 | 18?? | 1939 | 1943 | 1943 | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1948 |

The above shows the developments in communing membership in the congregations of the church that were the five largest at the beginning and at the end of the period. It will be noticed that only Ebenezer is among the five largest both years.

Brackets show all periods of sustained growth lasting for more than three years. None of the congregations has a period of sustained growth of more than seven consecutive years of the nineteen.

Each of the nine congregations had declines in communing membership at least twice. All those congregations that dropped from the list of the five largest congregations had considerably lower membership at the end of the period than earlier.

## APPENDIX VIII

### Important Events Relating to the Lutheran Church in Guyana.

1517—Beginning of the Reformation

1523—Dutch Monks Vos and Esschen become first Lutheran martyrs.

1530—The Augsburg Confession.

1588—(or before) Lutheran congregation at Amsterdam.

1627—First Dutch settlement in Berbice at Fort Nassau.

1736—First (?) Dutch Reformed pastor comes to Berbice.

1738—Moravians begin work in Berbice.

1743—Lutherans organize in Berbice at home of Abbensetts.

1752—Paerkenius arrives as first Lutheran pastor in Berbice.

1763—The great slave revolt.

1778—The church buys a plantation, a step leading to the establishment of the Berbice Lutheran Fund.

1795—The church buys land at the new site of New Amsterdam.

1803—British rule begins.

1808—The first evangelization of the slaves, by the London Missionary Society at the invitation of a planter.

1812—English becomes the official language of the colonies.

1824—London Missionary Smith, scapegoat for a slave revolt, under planter ire becomes "the Demerara Martyr."

1826—Lutheran pastor Vos begins evangelizing slaves.

1838—The emacipation of the slaves.

1841—Departure of the last Dutch pastor to British Guiana.

1842—Beginning of transition into English language in the church.

1875—Beginning of government supervision of Berbice Lutheran Fund, church revived under government decree.

1878—J. R. Mittelholzer becomes first Guianese Lutheran pastor.

1887—Mittelholzer expands work to Berbice River, Amerindians first reached with the ministry of the church.

1890—East Pennsylvania Synod affiliation.

1913—Death of Pastor Mittelholzer.

1915—Church taken over by the Board of Foreign Missions, General Synod.

1916—Arrival of Ralph J. White, first missionary from North America to the church.

1918—The church begins special outreach to the East Indians with Catechist Charles Bowen.

1936—Aubrey Bowen ordained as second Guianese Lutheran pastor.

1943—The church celebrates its 200th Anniversary, constituted as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana. Patrick A. Magalee elected first President.

1953—First election in British Guiana under universal adult suffrage, Dr Cheddi Jagan heads government of new faces and new approaches, constitution suspended.

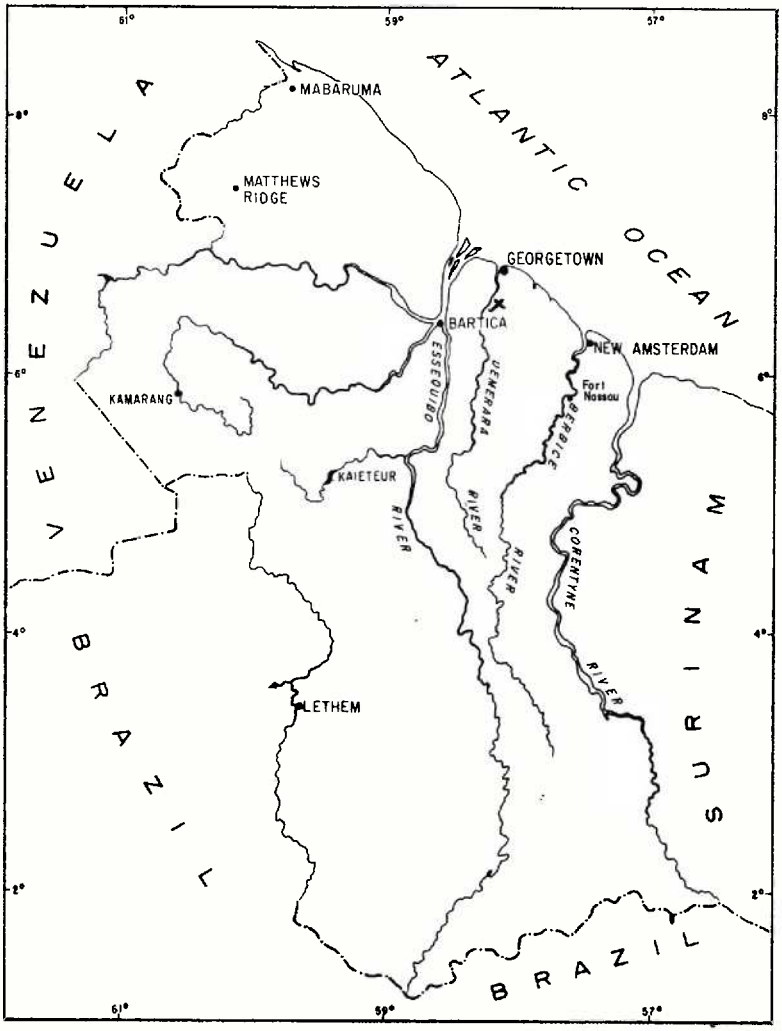
1956—Church constitution vitually suspended.

1966—The Lutheran Church in Guyana constituted with Winston Bone elected first president.

1966—Guyana becomes an independent nation with Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham first Prime Minister.

1968—The church celebrates its 225th Anniversary.

# GUYANA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Fort Nassau
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KAIETEUR
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DEMERARA RIVER
BERBICE RIVER
CORENTYNE RIVER
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VENEZUELA
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SURINAM
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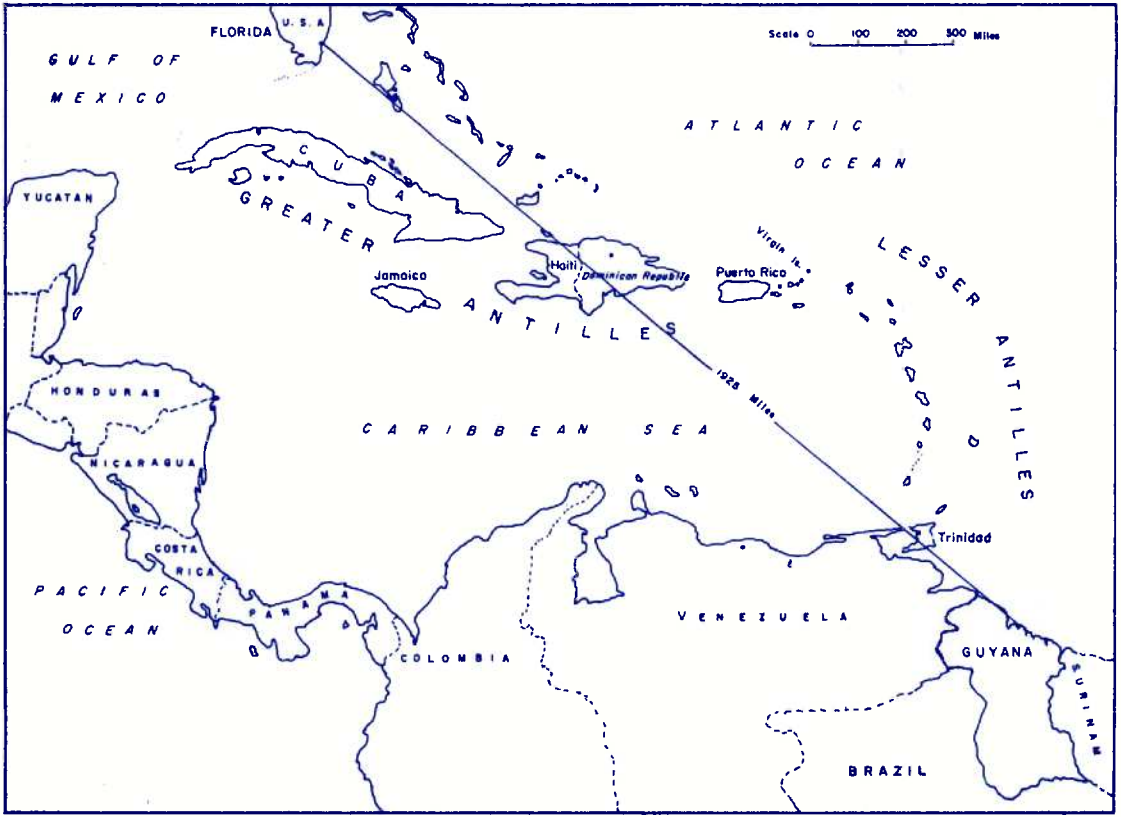
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NICARAGUA
COSTA RICA
PACIFIC OCEAN
PANAMA
COLOMBIA
Trinidad
VENEZUELA
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